

Backwoods



Home magazine

practical ideas for self-reliant living

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The smallpox threat...

It's time to worry!

**Keep your
heart healthy**

Foraging wild greens

Build a "temporary" home

Home canning = tasty meals

**Grow cauliflower, asparagus beans,
& blueberries**

www.backwoodshome.com

Backwoods Home Magazine is written for people who have a desire to pursue personal independence, self sufficiency, and their dreams. It offers "how to" articles on owner-built housing, independent energy, gardening, health, self-employment, country living, and other topics related to an independent and self-reliant lifestyle.

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ABOUT THE COVER

Another Jackie Clay photograph graces the cover of our magazine this issue. The subject of the photo is wild greens, specifically, a patch of lamb's quarters. But sitting right in the middle of the picture is her son, David, who was 9-years-old when the photo was snapped. Her article, which begins on page 58, is another installment of her on-going "Harvesting the Wild" series that is based on the self-reliant experiences of Jackie and her family.



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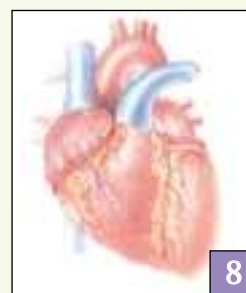
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Publisher's Note

How come no one is stocking up on dehydrated food and survival stuff?

Here's an interesting question I've been struggling with: How come no one is buying survival supplies like the number 10 cans of dehydrated foods, flashlights, extra fuel...you know, everything they were buying leading up to Y2K? I've got a feeling it has to do with the mass embarrassment everyone felt after they stocked up prior to Y2K, only to have that disaster be a no-show. People don't like to be had *once*, especially when all their friends knew they had been suckered in by the Y2K doomsayers, so they are reluctant to set themselves up to be had *twice*.

But I think that's a big mistake. I stocked up prior to Y2K too—not because I thought it would happen (you may recall my editorials predicting it wouldn't), but because the prices were very good with so many survival companies getting into the business. At least half of those survival companies went belly-up when Y2K did. Some that are still around, such as Ready Reserve Foods (they have an ad on page 42 of this issue) have been in the business for years and didn't stake everything on one single disaster. Their philosophy is like mine: it's simply prudent to be ready with a lot of *food that will keep* and supplies “just in case.”

I've still got about 24 cases of dehydrated number 10 cans of food containing stuff that keeps for years, and my cupboard is stuffed with cans of refried beans, olives, tomato sauce, fruits, soups, etc. And we've got big bags of beans, rice, flour, you name it, all neatly packed and dated. Of course we rotate our stuff so nothing spoils. I put a date on every can that goes into the pantry, and I always push the older stuff to the front after a big shopping trip.

The food and piles of survival supplies I also keep in good condition are just a comfort to have around...just in case something disrupts society's intricate mechanics. I'll bet I could take care of my family of five for at least two years if a just in case scenario ever happened.

And I think such a scenario has a much better chance of happening today than it ever did leading up to Y2K. That's why I struggle with the question: How come so few people are buying dehydrated foods and other supplies? Are they really that embarrassed about their Y2K mistake that they leave their families out on a limb in these times when terrorists are knocking on our door and threatening to blow us up. Terrorists have already knocked down some of our biggest buildings, and they threaten us with a jihad suicide mission every other day.

How long will it be before they make good on some of their threats? And, if they succeed in only a small way,

what will it mean for our transportation systems, our food delivery systems, our communications? What will it do to the prices of food at the supermarket...even for the short term? Would we have to pay through the nose to feed our family? Would we be without gas for our car for a couple of weeks? Would we have to hole up in our home for weeks or months if we were attacked by disease, nerve agent, a dirty nuclear bomb, or worse?

These are questions I wish some of *BHM's* readers would begin asking themselves again. Forget Y2K's embarrassment. Don't even tell people this time around you're stocking up. Besides, the best way to stock up—for food anyway—is with food you intend to eat occasionally so you learn how to make it appetizing. That way you'll be sure not to buy any more number 10 cans of stuff that tastes like dog food. You'll get the stuff you and your family find palatable, and you can experiment with it and learn to make delicious meals for that future just in case scenario.

We *do* live in uncertain times now, far more uncertain than at any time in my life. Everything you need to know to stock up and be prepared is contained in one of *BHM's* own books, called the *Emergency Preparedness and Survival Guide* (page 86 has an ad about it). It's inexpensive at \$12.95, which might be the price of a gallon of gas in a really bad disaster. You might want to get a copy, or if you can't afford to buy it get on the internet and go to www.backwoodshome.com and read up on some of our many preparedness articles posted there.

This is serious stuff, I feel. We've gone from being a nation totally prepared for a non-event to one relatively unprepared for some likely disruptions in society. If you'd like to learn about just one possibility, read my commentary on the next page.

Oregon rain

I live in Oregon, and Oregon gets rain, rain, rain, and more rain just about every day in the winter. Plus the wind blows down trees all day long so you always have to carry your chainsaw in your car. Thank God spring is just around the corner. I can hardly wait 'til the garden soil dries out enough. I think I'll do raised beds this year. — *Dave*



Dave Duffy

My view

Smallpox- it's worth worrying about

Is a smallpox epidemic brought about by terrorists something to worry about? After all, it is a horrible disease, killing 30% of its victims and terribly disfiguring, sometimes blinding, those who survive.

We've all read or heard something about smallpox, how Bush has ordered the vaccinating of the military and a half million medical "first responders," and how he's ordered more smallpox vaccine be ready for the general public by early 2004. Does he know something we don't?

And there's been a lot of discussion on how terrorists might attack us with smallpox: infected jihad volunteers walking among us, aerosolized containers containing weaponized smallpox placed surreptitiously on the walls of shopping malls and airports.

Most media pundits have concluded that it's a very small threat. Jihad volunteers would be too sick, and too noticeably ill, if they had smallpox to be able to walk around infecting people, and getting hold of weaponized smallpox would be about as hard to do as winning the lottery.

But I am a media pundit who has spent the last two months reading everything I can about smallpox, and I am very worried that a smallpox attack is *the threat* we should all take seriously. For one, I think getting hold of weaponized smallpox will be a lot easier than most people think; after all, someone got hold of weaponized anthrax and sent it though the mail shortly after 9-11.

But I also have another reason, a fact that has been overlooked in the media, it being perhaps too deeply embedded in the literature detailing the 12,000-year history of this greatest of all human plagues: a person previously vaccinated with the smallpox vaccine, then exposed to smallpox, can get a mild case of smallpox if his vaccination is so old it doesn't give him full protection. He may not even know he's sick, he will be able to walk around fine, he will have few symptoms, perhaps a light rash, but he will then be capable of passing on full blown smallpox to someone else, especially to our children who, almost without exception, have never been vaccinated.

This disturbing fact is one of the reasons why the "ring method" of controlling smallpox outbreaks was used back in the 1960s and 70s to finally eradicate the disease. With the ring method, all contacts of a smallpox victim were closely watched, vaccinated, and forcibly isolated if necessary until it was certain they had not contracted smallpox, even a mild form. Then a second ring of people who had had contacts with the first ring was established to make sure they hadn't been infected.

They took no chances. They knew that smallpox was persistent. It could remain alive in the clothing and bedding of

infected patients, even lay dried but alive in the dust of a patient's room, for months after the patient had either died or recovered. That's why disinfecting a smallpox patient's room was critical. Smallpox had already killed 300-500 million people in the 20th century, which is three to five times the number of people killed in all that century's wars combined. The final defeat of smallpox, the only disease to ever have been eradicated, is an achievement at least as significant as landing a man on the moon.

But if enough jihad volunteers with waning smallpox vaccinations (and that includes half the human race since most vaccinations stopped in the 70s) were to expose themselves to smallpox so that a few of them got a mild but contagious case of smallpox, they could then walk among us and bring smallpox back again to plague humanity. And here in the U.S., we wouldn't even know we had been attacked until two weeks later when our symptoms started showing up. By that time the jihad attackers could have travelled to dozens of cities in America and infected hundreds. The "ring method" of controlling the disease would not work because the jihad volunteers would not cooperate. They would be like so many Typhoid Marys. And the attackers wouldn't even have to commit suicide; they would recover and escape. We wouldn't even know how we had been attacked.

It is an impossible attack strategy to defend against, except if we resort to mass smallpox vaccinations. But that may be a very difficult strategy to sustain in light of the fact that data from the 1960s and 70s smallpox eradication program indicates that the vaccinia vaccine itself, which is made from cowpox, will kill one or two Americans per million vaccinated, and gravely sicken at least another 2,000. And that data does not take into account our modern day situation: millions of Americans with eczema-related skin conditions, AIDS, and other immune system problems who absolutely should not be given the vaccine unless they are in imminent danger of contracting smallpox.

Even an attack of this type that produced only a handful of smallpox cases would virtually shut down our society.

That's a big problem on a grand scale I hope the nation never has to face. But it is definitely worth worrying about.

At the individual level, it's less of a problem. If you're not among those in the "at risk" group, you can get vaccinated when the vaccine is made available to the public early next year—or earlier if there is an actual attack. The vaccine will protect you for up to four days after exposure to smallpox. If you're in the "at risk" group (I am because I've got an eczema-related skin condition) and we do get attacked, you can formulate a plan now, as I have, to isolate yourself and family (I'll also vaccinate my kids) with lots of food and survival stuff until the threat passes.

What are the odds of such an attack? What were the odds of them flying planes loaded with people into the WTC and Pentagon? — *Dave Duffy*

Keeping your heart healthy

By Gary F. Arnet, D.D.S.

“I’m sorry, Doctor Arnet, but you must have immediate cardiac bypass surgery. Your coronary arteries are 95% blocked.”

“That can’t be, doctor,” I replied. “I am only 38, I have no symptoms, I exercise, and I don’t smoke. Besides I have patients to see, young children to care for, and have to provide for my family.”

“I’m sorry. We will do the surgery Thursday. Get your affairs in order because you will be off work 12 weeks,” he answered.

Your life stands still when you get the news that you need cardiac bypass surgery. As I found out, all of the important things on your “to do” list don’t matter anymore. The places you need to go, the people you need to meet with, your family activities, your job, all of these things no longer are important. You are in a struggle for your life. While a safe, routine operation today, devastating or fatal complications can still occur and there is a long recovery period.

Whether you are 38 or 75 years, all sorts of worries go through your mind. You wonder how your family is going to manage while you are recovering, how you will pay your bills, what will happen to your job, and what will happen if you have a stroke or die during surgery. What type of lifestyle changes will you need to make afterwards? How will you learn about these? If you live by yourself, who is going to take care of you while you are recovering? You think about all the ways heart surgery will affect your life.

My oldest child was in second grade and my two youngest were in pre-school when I had heart surgery. I worried about how would my wife take care of them if something happened. Would they even remember me if I died? Heart surgery was certainly not something I wanted to deal with.



Author and his sons while hiking on a 90-mile backpacking trip that reached elevations of 12,000 feet. This trip was taken 10 years after author’s cardiac bypass surgery.

Yet, I was one of the lucky ones. For many people with heart disease, their first symptom is death. They have no warning until they collapse one day and die.

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. About 1.5 million Americans have a heart attack each year and about 500,000 of them die. About 2 million men are estimated to have significant coronary artery disease that they are not aware of because they have no symptoms.

Healthy heart living is not just for older adults. Autopsies of young men killed in the Vietnam War showed that many had coronary artery disease and lifestyles have not improved in

the past 30 years. Many of our youth today are overweight and don’t exercise. We are raising our next generation of heart attacks. It is important to teach young children healthy heart living as they are growing up.

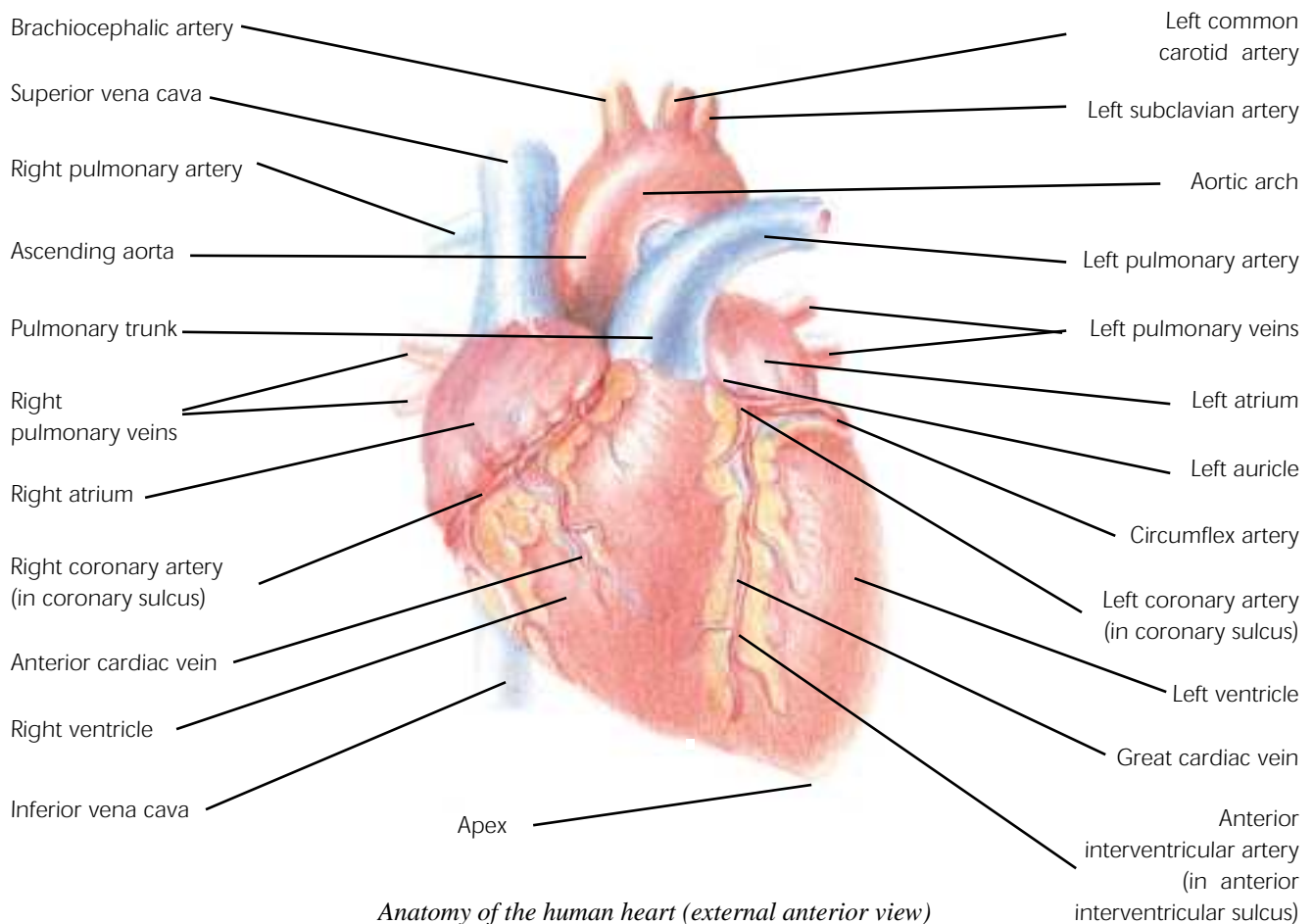
The good news is that many advances in the understanding and prevention of heart disease have occurred in recent years. With better knowledge, testing, and medications, people are living longer, healthier lives.

All of the information in this article is current and is taken from established medical recommendations and medical literature. It is intended for general knowledge on the subject, not as a substitute for proper medical evaluation and care. If you have any of the risk factors listed or any heart symptoms, you should see a physician and follow a plan for healthy heart living.

The heart

Ancient Greeks thought that the heart was the source of intelligence. Others throughout time believed it to be the seat of emotions. Most of us, however, don’t even think of our heart unless it beats hard or skips a beat.

The heart is actually a muscular pump located in the chest behind the sternum (breastbone) with its lowest point pointing to the left. About the size of a fist, it weighs less than a pound. The right side of the heart pumps the blood returning from the body to the lungs, replacing carbon dioxide waste products with oxygen. The left side of the heart is more muscular and pumps the oxygenated



blood from the lungs to all the tissues of the body.

The heart itself does not receive blood for its own use from the blood that flows through its chambers. Rather, it receives blood from the coronary arteries, blood vessels that arise from the aorta immediately as it exits the heart. The left coronary artery begins from the left side of the aorta and branches into two main branches, the anterior interventricular artery and the circumflex artery, providing blood to the middle and left sides of the heart. The right coronary artery branches off the right side of the aorta and splits into the marginal artery and posterior interventricular artery supplying blood to the right side of the heart.

The blood supplied by the coronary arteries nourishes and provides oxy-

gen to the muscle tissues of the heart. An interruption of coronary artery blood flow, as seen in coronary artery disease, can cause injury or death of the heart muscle supplied by the affected blood vessel.

What is heart disease?

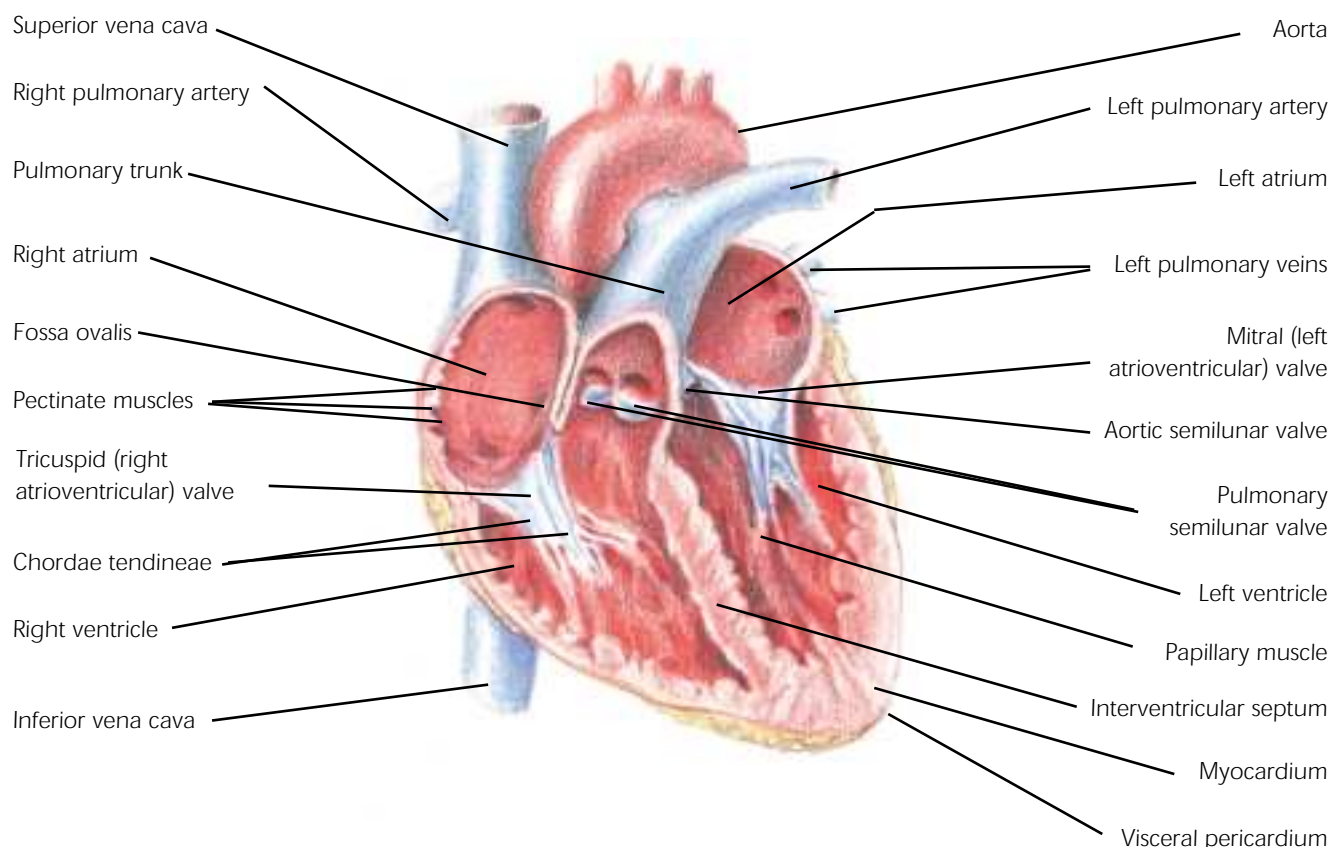
Heart disease can include problems to the coronary arteries, heart muscle, heart valves, or the conduction system. This article will deal only with coronary artery disease, the disease that leads to heart attacks.

Commonly called "hardening of the arteries," atherosclerosis and arteriosclerosis are medical terms used to describe a buildup of fatty deposits in the inner lining of the blood vessels of the body. When the arteries of the heart are affected it is called coronary artery disease. Blood vessels are par-

tially blocked, blood flow to the heart is diminished, and the heart muscle does not receive the amount of oxygen it needs. A common symptom of this is angina pectoris, or chest pain, due to low oxygen causing temporary injury to the heart muscle cells. This often occurs during exercise, when oxygen requirements of the heart are increased.

If blockage of the coronary arteries is prolonged or more complete, a heart attack (myocardial infarction) can occur as the lack of oxygen causes heart muscle cells to die. If the myocardial infarction is severe, an individual can die due to extensive loss of heart muscle tissue (a weakened heart) or electrical conduction disruption (arrhythmia).

Most people with symptoms of angina or heart attack have chest pain



Anatomy of the human heart (frontal section)

that stimulates them to seek medical care. Through diet and lifestyle changes, medications, or surgical intervention they can restore the blood flow to the heart and live a normal life. Surgical intervention can include an angioplasty, where a balloon is inserted inside the artery and it is stretched open, or bypass surgery, where other arteries or veins are grafted from the aorta to the heart to “bypass” the obstructed section of the coronary artery.

Unfortunately, the first warning some people have is death. They have silent ischemia, a condition where blood flow through the coronary arteries is diminished, but without causing pain to warn them. They can suffer a fatal heart attack and die suddenly without warning.

The good news is that coronary artery disease is largely preventable.

What causes coronary artery disease?

Long-term studies have clearly identified certain risk factors for coronary artery disease, heart attack, or stroke. Some factors, such as heredity, sex, race, and age, cannot be changed. Others, such as diet, cholesterol level, cigarette smoking, high blood pressure, diabetes, exercise, and stress, can be altered through lifestyle changes or medications.

Risk factors that cannot be changed can be used to determine the likelihood of developing heart disease. A family history of heart disease is a strong clue that children may develop disease. Family history would include a heart attack or sudden death of a father or male sibling occurring under the age of 55 or mother or female sibling occurring under the age of 65.

Men over the age of 45 and women over the age of 55 with normal menopause or over the age of 45 with early menopause and no estrogen replacement are at higher risk.

Millions of Americans begin unhealthy living habits at a young age. Children overeat, eat unhealthy foods high in cholesterol and fat, and do not exercise enough. Rather, they tend to be “couch potatoes” in front of the television, computer, or electronic games. This carries over into adolescence, where many add the habit of smoking. By the time they reach adulthood, many Americans are already obese, lead sedentary lifestyles, and smoke heavily.

A recent study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* found that over 60% of American adults were considered overweight and 5% extremely obese. We don’t need stud-

ies to show that is true. Just look around when you are with a group of people.

Most individuals reach their adult weight by age 21 to 25. After this age, fewer calories are needed to maintain the same weight. Unfortunately, most people in their 30's and 40's eat at least as much as they did in their 20's, if not more, and are usually less physically active. The calories eaten in excess of those burned by metabolism and exercise are stored as fat.

Individuals who are significantly overweight (over 30% greater than normal weight) have a shorter life span than those who are normal weight. For example, middle aged men who are overweight have a three times greater chance of having a fatal heart attack as men the same age who are not overweight. Studies are indicating that individuals who reduce their calorie intake by 20 to 40% may prevent or delay heart disease, even when they start doing so at middle age.

Diet is important not only in managing weight, but also the amount of fat and cholesterol in the blood. Cholesterol is both manufactured by the body and taken in through diet. Excess cholesterol is deposited in the inner lining of arteries, causing atherosclerosis. It is thought that cholesterol needs a chemical reaction called oxidation to form pockets of disease known as plaques. Vitamin C and vitamin E are anti-oxidants and are sometimes recommended as it is thought they may help reduce plaque formation.

Individuals with increased risk of LDL cholesterol, to be discussed later, of over 130 mg/dL or HDL cholesterol of less than 40 mg/dL are at greater risk. The risk of having a heart attack doubles when the total cholesterol rises from 200 to 250.

Cholesterol management is somewhat dependant on the natural production of cholesterol by the body.

Occasionally, individuals can eat virtually cholesterol-free diets (such as strict vegetarians) and have very high natural cholesterol levels. Many other people can have dramatic lowering of their cholesterol with only moderate dietary changes.

High blood pressure (hypertension) is associated with an increased risk of heart attack. The increased pressure on artery walls seems to set up an inflammatory reaction that causes heart disease. Blood pressure exceeding 140/90 mmHg can damage the heart, kidneys, and other organs and increases the risk of heart attack, stroke, or kidney failure.

Smoking currently or within the past 5 years raises the chance of many diseases including heart disease. The younger an individual is when they begin smoking, the greater the future risk. Individuals who quit smoking have a lower death rate from heart attack than current smokers.

Diabetics almost all have high cholesterol and have up to four times more than the normal risk of heart attack. Aggressive treatment of diabetes with diet, weight management, and medication is important to minimize heart disease and other debilitating complications.

A sedentary lifestyle may lead to a higher risk of heart disease. Exercise tones muscles and the heart, stimulates circulation, and helps maintain normal weight. Strenuous exercise or work in someone unaccustomed to such activity may cause a heart attack in an apparently healthy individual with undiagnosed heart disease, so a physician should be consulted before starting an exercise program.

Other known factors that lead to heart disease include a Type A personality, especially in hostility prone individuals, depression, and lack of a supportive primary relationship. It is also known that job stress in individuals who have other cardiac risk factors can trigger heart attacks. Individuals who felt they had high

demands at work with little opportunity for advancement and a feeling that their job was not rewarding were twice as likely to have a heart attack, according to a study in the British Medical Journal.

Our understanding of heart disease is changing rapidly. Medical researchers are constantly identifying other risk factors that cause heart disease.

Inflammation is emerging as a major factor in the development of coronary artery disease. It appears that in some individuals the immune system attacks the coronary arteries in response to inflammation or infection. A recent study of 28,000 women at Boston's Brigham and Women's Hospital has conclusively shown that inflammation by itself can cause heart attacks in women with normal cholesterol levels.



A healthy lifestyle is important beginning at a young age. Eat right, exercise, and minimize your risk factors for heart disease. Finding some physical activity that you enjoy makes it easier to exercise on a regular basis. In the winter, my daughter, Sonja, cross-country skis for relaxation and exercise.



It is easy to forget how many calories you are eating. This typical fast food meal consisting of a Big X-tra hamburger with cheese, super-sized fries, chocolate shake, and apple Danish has 2120 calories. For many people, this one meal alone exceeds the calories recommended for an entire day.

Doctors believe that a chemical necessary for fighting infection, C-reactive protein (CRP), is produced by the body and does damage to the blood vessels of the heart by weakening plaques in the linings of the arteries. When plaques weaken enough, they burst releasing a chemical that causes the blood to clot and block blood flow through the artery, causing a heart attack.

In the Boston study, women with high levels of CRP had a greater chance of heart attack even when they had low cholesterol levels. High CRP levels combined with high cholesterol levels made the risk even greater.

Inflammation that raises CRP levels can be caused by anything from a lingering infection, smoking, high blood pressure, or obesity. Bacterial or viral infections that can linger in your body for years are also being looked at as a source of inflammation. A respiratory infection due to *Chlamydia pneumoniae* is known to be associated with an increased risk of heart attack. It can be tested for in the blood and treated with antibiotics. Even low-grade gingival (gum) infections are suspected as a source.

Both aspirin and "statin" drugs used to treat high cholesterol, such as pravastatin (Pravachol), lovostatin

(Mevacor), or atorvastatin (Lipitor), have been shown to lower C-reactive protein levels.

C-reactive protein in the blood can be tested with a simple blood test. It is probably a good idea for everyone who has their cholesterol checked to also have their CRP checked. Doctors are still debating which individuals should be checked and what to do if CRP levels are high. The American Heart Association is currently discussing recommendation guidelines for testing. As this may com-

pletely change the way we think about and manage heart disease, until they decide, it is probably a good idea to pay attention to inflammation as a risk factor.

An amino acid called homocysteine can be found in elevated levels in some individuals. Doctors feel this can irritate the inner lining of blood vessels and be a source of inflammation that can trigger a heart attack. Recent studies have shown that lowering the homocysteine levels by 25% will lower an individual's risk of heart disease by 10%. Adequate levels of folic acid and vitamins B-6 and B-12 in the diet or in dietary supplements will reverse high homocysteine levels.

Metabolic syndrome affects one in four Americans and is considered a risk for heart disease. It is a syndrome that includes three or more of the following conditions: heavy around the waist, low HDL, high triglyceride levels, borderline or high blood pressure, or elevated blood sugar. Each of these can be treated.

A cholesterol product called lipoprotein (a) is another risk factor that is thought to contribute to formation of blood clots in coronary arteries. Up to 30% of individuals with

early heart disease have high levels of lipoprotein (a). Levels are largely hereditary and can be tested with a simple blood test. Estrogen or high doses of niacin can lower these levels.

As you can see, there are many factors involved in heart disease and there is no question that understanding it all is complex. In fact, the health of the coronary arteries has been shown to be so important that a new specialty in medicine is in the process of developing. Endotheliologists (named after the inner lining of blood vessels) will be physicians that manage all the conditions that affect artery health.

Fortunately, it is not necessary for us to understand why everything works in order to make the lifestyle changes that can reduce the risk of heart disease.

Assessing your risk

My physician saved my life. While having a routine annual physical, I mentioned a vague shoulder pain I had while swimming. He suggested I have an exercise treadmill to make sure it was not coming from the heart. "I think it is bursitis," I said. "I exercise regularly and don't have chest pain."

He convinced me to do it and after a few additional tests, I was on the operating table. I was lucky he was suspicious and didn't just assume it was bursitis. I could have been one of the many who die suddenly.

The first thing to do to assess your risk of heart disease is to see a physician to evaluate your risk factors and develop a plan for healthy heart living. Laboratory studies (blood work) should be obtained. Depending on your situation, other heart studies might be recommended. Your physician can also help you safely start an exercise program.

For those individuals who have been determined to have no risks of heart disease, following a healthy heart lifestyle is all that is needed.



Aerobic exercise decreases the risk of heart disease by lowering cholesterol, triglycerides, and blood pressure. Swimming, dancing, walking, jogging, bicycling, or similar activities are good activities. Treadmills have been found to be the most effective indoor exercise equipment.

Individuals with cholesterol, blood pressure, or diabetes problems can be helped with medications in addition to a healthy heart lifestyle.

Laboratory studies

Cholesterol is a type of fat, called a lipid, which the body uses to build cells and certain hormones. It is produced by the body and is also absorbed through our diet. When the level of cholesterol in our blood is more than is needed, it may build up along artery walls.

Cholesterol molecules in the blood attach to a protein as they travel throughout the body. This molecule is called a lipoprotein. Lipoproteins are classified as to how much fat is attached to the protein. Ones with more protein than fat are called high-density lipoproteins, or HDL, while

lipoproteins with more fat than protein are called low-density lipoproteins, or LDL. Triglycerides are another type of lipid (fat) measured in the blood.

The risk of heart disease is commonly assessed by simple blood tests that evaluate the amount of lipids in the bloodstream. The National Cholesterol Education Program recommends a routine fasting lipid analysis (lipid panel) for adults every 5 years, starting at age 20. A typical lipid panel will evaluate the total cholesterol, LDL, HDL, and triglycerides.

Total cholesterol

Total cholesterol is typically used as a screening to determine the total amount of lipids in the body. Levels below 200 mg/dL are recommended. A middle-aged man who has a level of 250 mg/dL has twice the risk of having a heart attack as compared to what it would be if it was 200 mg/dL. Since coronary artery disease takes years to develop, a high total cholesterol level in a young individual definitely needs to be taken seriously.

Total cholesterol can be lowered by diet (reducing saturated fats while increasing fiber and complex carbohydrates), weight loss, and exercise.

Disposable home cholesterol tests can be obtained without a prescription. They test total cholesterol and can be as accurate for screening as tests used by physicians. Costing about \$10 to \$20 they are performed by an individual by sticking their finger to obtain blood and placing it on a thermometer-like test strip. Results are given not in numbers, but in according to risk of heart disease: normal, borderline-high, and high. They may be useful as a screening, but, if elevated, one should see a physician for a complete lipid panel.

LDL cholesterol

LDL is commonly called the “bad cholesterol” because it is the ches-

terol that accumulates on the inner lining of arteries. LDL cholesterol is calculated (vs. being measured) from the total cholesterol, HDL, and triglyceride measurements. When the triglyceride level is high, this can give an inaccurate LDL level.

Low levels of LDL help prevent heart diseases. LDL levels of less than 130 mg/dL are recommended in individual with no history of heart disease. Individuals with a history of heart disease should have levels of LDL below 100 mg/dL.

Besides a high-fat diet or heredity, high LDL levels can be caused by medications, including some diuretics, corticosteroids, androgens (male sex hormones), tranquilizers, and birth control pills. Diabetes, anabolic steroid use, and a number of diseases also raise LDL.



Strength and resistance exercises (muscle toning) using free weights, weight-training machines, or elastic tubing is an effective way to build lean muscle tissue. Increasing lean muscle mass helps reduce weight and reverses the natural progression of muscle loss that occurs with age.

Lowering LDL cholesterol can be done with a low-fat diet, exercise, or medications.

HDL cholesterol

HDL is commonly called the “good cholesterol” because it removes LDL cholesterol from the blood by binding with it in the bloodstream and transporting it to the liver where it is disposed. A high level of HDL lowers an individual’s risk of coronary artery disease.

An HDL level should be as high as possible. A level of greater than 40 mg/dL is preferable. Lower than this and an individual is at risk of coronary artery disease. Low HDL levels are largely determined by genetics, however, they may also be caused by diabetes, smoking, excessive weight, lack of exercise, or high triglycerides.

HDL can be increased by vigorous physical exercise, losing weight, and stopping smoking. As much as a 5 pound loss of weight can increase HDL. Moderate alcohol use (1 ounce per day) may be beneficial and increase HDL, but may also have the negative effect of raising triglycerides and contributing to liver problems or alcoholism.

Ratio of LDL/HDL

An individual with a low HDL is at less risk if their LDL is also low because there is less circulating LDL to attach to the artery walls. Conversely, an individual with a high HDL can tolerate higher levels of LDL without developing coronary artery disease.

Triglycerides

A type of fat used by the body to store energy, triglycerides are found in only small amounts in the blood. Still, they are a type of fat that can also build up in the walls of arteries. High levels of triglycerides, with or without

high levels of LDL, are a risk factor for coronary artery disease.

Triglyceride levels are considered normal if they are below 150 mg/dL. Borderline high are 150 to 199, high 200 to 500, and very high is above 500.

High triglyceride levels can be caused by diet, weight gain, alcohol, diabetes, kidney disease, and heredity. Triglyceride levels can be lowered by a low-fat diet, losing weight, increased exercise, and medications. A 5-pound weight loss is enough to help lower triglycerides.

It has been clearly established that triglycerides can also be lowered with omega-3 fatty acid, therefore decreasing the risk of cardiac disease. A study of 11,000 individuals who had heart attacks found that sudden cardiac death was reduced 45% when patients took 850 mg of omega-3 fatty acids per day.

Omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acid can be obtained through diet. Commonly referred to as “fish oil,” it is found in fish and some plants. Fish sources, including albacore tuna, salmon, Rainbow trout, Atlantic cod, and some other fish, are a source of EPA and DHA, two types of polyunsaturated fatty acids. Plant sources include almonds, walnuts, raw soybeans, and flaxseed and are a source of ALA, the third type of polyunsaturated fatty acid. Note that flaxseed



Omega 3 fatty acids, found naturally in fish and some plants, can help lower elevated triglyceride levels. Dietary supplements, as shown here, are a way to include enough omega 3 fatty acids in the diet daily.

also causes a huge increase in the risk of prostate cancer, so it is not a good idea for men to use this as a source of omega-3.

Another source of omega-3 fatty acid is a dietary supplement. It is recommended that four capsules each containing 300 mg of EPA and 200 mg of DHA be taken daily. Trader Darwin’s Omega-3, available at Trader Joe’s, and Omega Caps, available at health stores, are two brands that contain the correct amount. Take 2 capsules twice a day.

Other blood tests

After initial screening of the lipid level in the body, a physician may recommend additional blood tests. These may include checking levels of VLDL (very-low-density lipoprotein), homocystine, C-reactive protein, or lipoprotein a. As mentioned previously, it may become common to have C-reactive protein tested with the initial lipid testing.

Heart studies

Depending on symptoms, history, and cardiac risk factors, other tests may be recommended by your physician to screen for coronary artery disease. These may include an EKG, exercise EKG (treadmill), heart scan, or angiogram.



Medications prescribed by a physician can lower cholesterol levels when diet and exercise alone are not enough.

What you can do

Health heart living is following a healthy lifestyle that will reduce your risk of heart disease while also helping to prevent a stroke, other vascular disease, diabetes, and a number of other disabling diseases. Many of these recommendations also reduce the risk of cancer.

Healthy heart living can be accomplished through your lifestyle, diet, dietary supplements, and, as needed, medications from your doctor.

Is it easy to change your lifestyle? It hasn't been for me. We are so accustomed to eating a certain way, living a certain way, and to our daily routine. Our social life also partially determines our activity and what we eat. I have lived a healthy heart lifestyle for the 12 years since my surgery and I still struggle with it at times. It doesn't mean we shouldn't try, however.

Diet

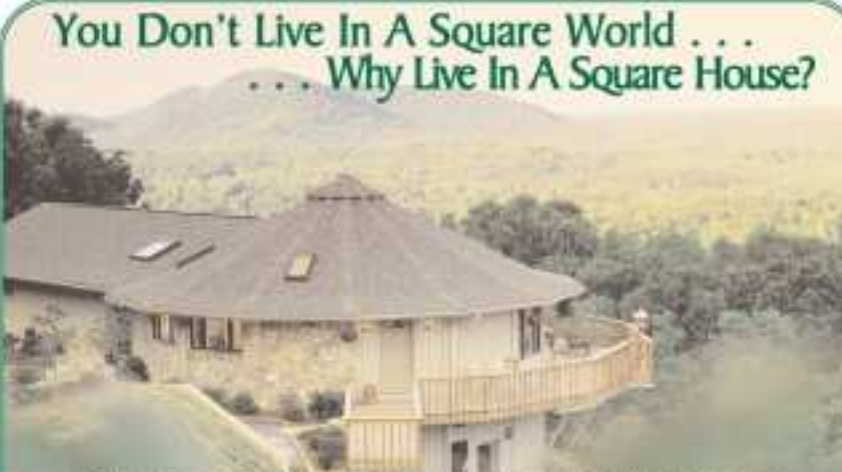
A diet low in fat is recommended. Current guidelines recommend the total calories from fat in a diet be 25 to 35%, from carbohydrates 50 to 60%, and from protein 15%. Saturated fats, such as found in cheese, whole milk, and red meat, should be less than 7% of the total calories.

Practically speaking, this means to go light on meat and eggs, use low-fat dairy products, watch the amount of fat and oils, eat fruits and vegetables, and use low-fat breads, cereals, and grains.

Meats should be limited to 5 to 6 ounces per day of lean meat, poultry without skin, or fish (not fried). Cold-water fish have fish oil, unsaturated omega-3 fatty acids, which have been shown to decrease triglycerides.

Egg yolks should be limited to less than 2 to 4 per week, substituting 2 egg whites for one whole egg in recipes. Many egg substitute products are available at the market and in many restaurants.

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Two to three servings of low-fat dairy products per day are recommended. These could include skim milk, low-fat yogurt, low-fat cheese, low-fat cottage cheese, or frozen yogurt. Use low-fat creamer and low or nonfat sour cream.

Unsaturated oils are healthier than saturated oils. Unsaturated oils include safflower oil, sunflower oil, olive oil, canola oil, and oils in seeds and nuts. Saturated oils include coconut oil, palm oil, and milk chocolate. Watch the amount of oils used on salads. Three tablespoons of olive oil on a salad or in food is the same amount of calories as eating three, four-ounce scoops of ice cream.

Six or more servings of breads or cereals per day are recommended. These should be low-fat breads, cereals, and grains, including whole grain bread, oats, wheat, or corn, low-fat crackers, rice, and pastas. Avoid high fat pastries, croissants, and granola.

Fresh vegetables should include 3 to 5 servings per day, especially including green vegetables. Avoid fried vegetables, cream sauce, or cheese sauce. Include 2 to 4 servings of fruit per day, avoiding fried fruits, cream sauce, or butter sauce.

Soups tend to be high in calories, fat, and sodium. When choosing soups, avoid ones containing whole milk, cream, fats, or skins.

Desserts and sweets taste so great because they are full of fat and saturated oils. It is easy to add a lot of calories and fat to your diet by eating milk chocolate, doughnuts, cream pies, commercial pies and cakes, and desserts containing coconut oil, palm oil, or palm kernel oil.

Instead, eat low-fat cookies, pies, or pudding containing egg whites or egg substitutes, skim milk, and unsaturated oil or margarine. Angel food cake, fig or fruit bars, and ginger snaps are good alternatives. Frozen yogurt, ice milk, sherbet, and sorbet are good replacements for ice cream. Candy

made with sugar, syrup, or honey, such as candy corn, gum drops, and hard candy, is a better alternative than chocolates.

I found that changing my diet was actually one of the easiest changes to accomplish. It is mostly being aware of what you are eating and choosing healthy alternatives. It is not as hard as it seems.

Exercise

Exercise, on the other hand, is harder to incorporate into your lifestyle. It takes time and it takes effort. If it is not something you already do regularly, it means finding the time and energy to exercise in your already busy schedule. Its benefits, however,

Here are the key things you can do to live a healthy heart lifestyle:

- Eat a proper diet
- Exercise
- Lose weight
- Manage lipids
- Blood pressure control
- Stop smoking
- Aggressively treat diabetes
- Dietary supplements

are not some vague "improvement of future health." Exercise makes you feel better, sleep better, and have more energy. It makes you more productive and happier.

Physical exercise is the greatest way to keep weight off and strengthen muscle, yet most adults in the United States perform little or none. Twenty-five percent are completely sedentary and over 60% are physically active less than 30 minutes per day. Among Americans over 65 years old, 75% are sedentary.

Exercise builds healthy muscle. Aerobic exercise, such as walking, running, and swimming, increases the heart rate and is necessary for heart health. Strength and resistance exercises build and preserve lean muscle tissue. An exercise program should

provide both and it is not as hard as one might think. It simply requires an exercise plan that you enjoy and will follow.

Aerobic exercise decreases the risk of heart disease, decreases cholesterol and triglycerides, lowers blood pressure, reduces risk of colon, breast, and prostate cancer, decreases osteoporosis, reduces obesity, and improves the immune system, among other things. Daily, it is recommended that an individual have 30 minutes or more of moderate physical activity, such as a brisk walk for 30 minutes or three ten-minute walks. Three or more times per week, more intensive exercise that brings the heart rate to 60-80% of maximum for 20 to 60 minutes is recommended. This could include swimming, dancing, walking, jogging, bicycling, or similar activities.

For years I tried various indoor exercise programs using treadmills, stationary bikes, and more. I struggled every day with exercise because I hated it and would make any excuse not to make time to exercise. I'm too tired, too busy, I have to go here, I have to go there, my muscles still hurt from last time—I used them all. And I knew better. I had already been through heart surgery.

Then, I figured out I love to exercise outdoors. I don't care if it is hot, raining, or snowing, I would rather do something outdoors than stay inside. So, for me, bike riding, hiking, swimming, and snowshoeing are ways I enjoy getting aerobic exercise.

Many of my friends are the opposite. They like to watch television while exercising or enjoy the social interaction of sports clubs, so they use exercise machines indoors. Actually, treadmills have been found to be the most effective indoor exercise equipment, requiring more energy use than Stairmasters, rowing machines, Nordic track, or exercise bikes. Exercising indoors is also bet-

ter when it is dark or bad weather outside.

Outdoors or indoors, it doesn't matter. What is important is that you find something that you enjoy doing and will work with your schedule. If it is fun, you will do it without making excuses.

Speaking of schedules, if you don't include exercise in your schedule, it is never going to happen. You will never just "find time" in your day. Plan exercise into your daily schedule.

Some other practical exercise tips include walking instead of driving when possible, parking your car at a distance from a mall or office, using stairs instead of an elevator, playing golf without a cart, and exercising while watching television.

After age 20, an individual loses seven-tenths of a pound of muscle mass per year. Not only does strength decrease, but lean muscle mass uses energy. The more muscle mass an individual loses, the fewer calories their body burns in a day. Their metabolism decreases and they gain weight while eating the same amount of calories.

If you are trying to lose weight, gaining muscle mass will increase your metabolism and burn more calories. For every pound of lean muscle mass a body increases, 50 calories more are used per day. Just one pound of increased muscle mass will burn 18,250 calories more per year, or 5.2 pounds of weight loss. Five pounds of increased muscle will cause 26 pounds of weight loss per year!

Aerobic exercise does not build lean muscle mass. Strength and resistance exercises (muscle toning) performed twice a week are the most effective way to build muscle tissue. A muscle is challenged to perform above its current strength level by free weights, weight-training machines, elastic tubing, or an individual's body weight, stimulating production of lean muscle.



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Forget the image of body builders or weight lifters. That is not what most of us need. A simple program using elastic tubing at home is as effective as "pumping iron" at a club. Strength and resistance training has even been shown to improve health and reduce injuries in elderly individuals living in retirement homes.

The key is to exercise regularly doing exercises that do not cause injury to joints or back. Start slow and avoid overdoing it with heavy weights. Increase weight or repetitions as time goes on. In his book, "Business Plan for the Body," author Jim Karas, shows with descriptions and photographs a low-impact strength and resistance program using elastic bands at home. Sports and exercise clubs also have trainers who can help develop a plan for an individual.

Lose weight

If you are one of the millions who are overweight, losing pounds can help your health tremendously. Despite hundreds of diets, exercise machines, and pills available, Americans are still grossly overweight. Most know that being overweight is not good for health, but it is hard to do anything about it.

Weight-loss is a major industry in our country, often based on the fact that we want quick fixes. The problem is that many of the products or diets don't work, or when they do, we regain the weight rapidly when we go

off the product. It can take months of work to lose 20 pounds and a few weeks to put it back on.

I know this is true. Realizing I would be hiking at elevations as high as 10,000 to 12,000 feet, I trained for 6 months to go with my sons on a rugged 90-mile backpacking trip at Philmont Boy Scout Ranch in the mountains of New Mexico. I lost 30 pounds between the training and the trip. I felt great when my pants were too loose on the way home, but not so great when they were tight again a mere three weeks later.

The answer to weight-loss is actually pretty simple, but most of us don't want to hear it. If you eat fewer calories than you use, you will lose weight. Period.

This can be accomplished by eating less, by exercising more, or by doing both. If you eat right and exercise, you will lose weight. It is impossible not to lose pounds.

This does not mean it will be quick. After all, it took time to gain the extra pounds and it will take time to lose it. However, losing weight requires a permanent lifestyle change. It has to be more than just a temporary adjustment.

Individuals do differ and some lose weight easier than others. Genetics and metabolic conditions certainly are a factor. Twenty-five percent of an individual's weight is determined by genetics and the rest is determined by environment and behavior. For most of us, eating is 20% physical and

80% emotional. We eat without thinking when we are stressed, tired, or in social situations. Women typically lose weight slower than men since they frequently have less lean muscle tissue.

The first thing to do to lose weight is to determine what your body needs to survive, your basal metabolic rate. The basal metabolic rate is the amount of energy your body needs to function if you were to do nothing but stay in bed awake for 16 hours and asleep for 8. Add to this your activity per day and this is the amount of calories you need to maintain the same weight.

The formula for calculating your basal metabolic rate (BMR) is:

For Women:

$$\begin{aligned} &661 \\ &+ (4.38 \times \text{weight in pounds}) \\ &+ (4.38 \times \text{height in inches}) \\ &- (4.7 \times \text{age}) \\ &= \text{BMR} \end{aligned}$$

For Men:

$$\begin{aligned} &67 \\ &+ (6.24 \times \text{weight in pounds}) \\ &+ (12.7 \times \text{height in inches}) \\ &- (6.9 \times \text{age}) \\ &= \text{BMR} \end{aligned}$$

Instead of doing the calculations yourself, you can also go to the website www.fpnotebook.com (click on "Dietician in a Box") and let them do the calculations.

As an example, a 35 year old woman who is 5'5" tall and weighed 145 pounds would have a BMR of 1,416 calories per day. A man of the same age, height, and weight would have a BMR of 1556 calories per day. To this, add the calories expended by activity and exercise. Multiply the BMR by 1.15 for a sedentary lifestyle, 1.3 for normal, everyday activity, 1.4 if you exercise 3 to 4 times per week, 1.6 for exercise 4 to 5 times per week, and 1.8 for exercise 6 to 7 times per week.

If our 35 year-old woman's daily activity is limited to normal, everyday activities with no other exercise, she could eat 1,416 calories x 1.3, or 1840 calories, per day to maintain her current weight, while our 35 year-old man could eat 2023 calories. If they ate more, they would gain weight. If they ate less, exercised more, or both, they would lose weight. For every 3,500 calories that you exercise in excess of the calories you eat, you will lose one pound of weight in the form of fat. So, if you burn 500 calories a day more than you eat, you will lose 1 pound in 7 days.

It is very easy to eat more than we should. Awareness of how many calories we are eating is the most important part of weight-loss. For example, a typical "healthy" dinner at an Italian restaurant might include 2 pieces of bread, a Caesar salad, a tomato, basil and olive oil pasta, 2 glasses of wine, and a few bites of dessert. This "healthy" dinner is approximately 2,300 calories, almost the total caloric intake for the entire day for our above man and woman.

If our woman exercised four times a week, her daily caloric needs increase to 2,265 calories, an increase of 60%. She can eat 849 calories more a day in addition to her BMR and not gain weight or eat the same and lose weight at a rate of about 1 pound every 4 days. Our man also increases 60% to 2489 calories, an increase of 934 calories over BMR. He could lose a pound every 3.5 days. It is certainly easier to exercise four days a week than it is to cut 800 to 1000 calories from out diet.

To lose weight, it is important to really pay attention to the portion size and calories. This can be done through self-determination or with support groups such as Weight Watchers. Recording the calories you eat daily in a notebook is a useful way to help watch calories. It is surprising how fast they add up.

A impressive website called Family Practice Notebook, a site intended for

physicians, but available to anyone, has a unique, free analysis that can also help get you started. When you enter your age, weight, height, food likes and dislikes, and types of exercises you would do, it will calculate your metabolic rates, caloric needs, and give you a detailed print-out of recommendations for diet, ideal calories per day to eat, exercise, and weight-loss using the foods you like (or are at least willing to eat) and the exercise you like to do. It can be accessed by going to www.fpnotebook.com and clicking on "Dietician in a Box."

Lipid management

Diet, exercise, and weight loss may take care of high cholesterol for many individuals. Minor changes in diet and weight make major changes in cholesterol levels for many people. For others, diet changes alone won't work. If it does not, then there are numerous cholesterol-lowering medications available through your physician.

The morning I entered the hospital for my surgery, I ate a high-fat diet of Eggs Benedict and ham, knowing I would never eat these foods again. A few hours after eating this meal, I had a non-fasting cholesterol test that showed me to have a cholesterol level of 200. After one year of being a complete vegetarian, eating no dairy, no eggs, and a very low-fat diet, my total cholesterol was 200. No change despite all that effort. Despite all my diet changes, I have a body that produces its own high cholesterol and medications are the answer.

High blood pressure

High blood pressure is a silent killer. You cannot feel when your blood pressure is high, so have your blood pressure checked by your physician. If you are prone to high blood pressure, buy an automatic blood pressure cuff, widely available at department stores and drug stores,

and keep a record of your blood pressure.

While there are many causes of high blood pressure, some known and some unknown, it is usually controllable. Treatment includes weight loss if overweight, elimination of smoking, modifying stressful living habits, and increasing exercise. When these are not enough, medications to lower blood pressure can be prescribed by a physician. This will eliminate the harmful effects caused by high blood pressure.

Smoking and diabetes

If you smoke, stopping is important. Just as with weight loss, it is not easy for some people. Talk to your physician. They will be able to help with medications and information on local stop smoking groups that may help.

Diabetics need to aggressively control their diet and medications in order to prevent complications to all of the blood vessels of the body, including the coronary arteries.

Dietary supplements

Several dietary supplements and vitamins available at most markets and pharmacies are recommended by physicians for patients at risk of coronary artery disease. A multivitamin with vitamin B-6 and B-12 and a tablet of folic acid 400 micrograms per day helps decrease homocysteine levels which irritate linings of arteries. Vitamin C, 500 mg per day, and vitamin E, 400 IU per day, act as antioxidants. Two capsules twice a day of omega-3 fatty acid containing 300 mg of EPA and 200 mg of DHA may help reduce triglycerides.

Do it now

Is it easy to make these lifestyle changes? For most of us the answer is no. I have lived them for the 12 years since my heart surgery, so I understand.

However, they are necessary for all of us whether or not we have been

diagnosed with heart disease. Healthy heart living can make you feel better and give a better quality of life.

Although it can seem overwhelming at first, all you have to do is to set your mind to it and make the changes. If it seems like too much, work at it a little bit at a time. See your physician, start doing some exercise, improve your diet, lose some weight, or stop smoking. Then, gradually improve other areas. Many hospitals offer education in healthy heart living, often associated with their cardiac rehabilitation or community education programs.

Can you make all of the changes at once? Absolutely. Many people "see the light" when they have heart problems and are forced to make all the changes at once. They are scared into making changes. If they can, so can you.

The key is to start today to do something towards a healthy heart lifestyle. Not only will you feel better, I can guarantee that you don't want to hear, "I am sorry, you need immediate heart surgery." Δ

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There are more compelling moments. A female jogger is pounced and killed by a cougar. A man who has doubtless read in the books that black bears don't attack humans is attacked and killed by a black bear who apparently does not read. Some of our readers have much bigger bears than that in their neighborhoods. Some share their turf with poisonous snakes. More are probably bothered by feral or outlaw dogs than any other dangerous four-legged beast. And there is always the two-legged predator to worry about. A gun in the house won't help you if you can't get to it. The rural Clutter family was said to own rifles and shotguns. If so, they couldn't get at them when they were massacred by the murderers Truman Capote made infamous in his book "In Cold Blood."

Resolved: It can make sense for responsible adults in locations remote from assistance and possibly infested with lethally dangerous life forms to have a loaded handgun on their person where they can reach it.

Different authorities have taken different approaches. The great hunter and rifleman Jack O'Connor said that if he could own only one handgun, it would be the graceful .22 caliber target revolver known as the Smith &

Wesson K-22. Good for putting the turtle in turtle soup, but a bit light for the more dangerous fauna. Another great shooter and hunter, Elmer Keith, said the handgun he'd keep if he could have only one would be a Smith & Wesson .44 Magnum with four-inch barrel. Now, that's a tune I can march to. If I won the lottery and retired to a remote cabin, my daily wear would include my favorite version of Keith's pet revolver, the S&W Model 629 Mountain Gun.

However, like Keith, I've become habituated over decades to wearing a full size handgun at my hip during virtually all my waking hours. An outdoor person new to the armed lifestyle is likely to find the big .44 too heavy and bulky to wear 24/7. Most cops carry lighter guns than that, and can't wait to get the weight off their hips at the end of an eight to twelve hour shift. Therefore, the "always" gun for the backwoods person should be light and compact enough for constant carry.

There is also the matter of discretion. For people like Keith or me who have carried a gun for a living, the people we associate with us are used to us being armed. Your visitors from the city, the rural postman, and the yuppie who bought the parcel of land next door to yours may freak at the sight of a handgun worn openly on your hip. There's also the matter of going into town on errands and to catch up with neighbors over a cup of coffee. A century or so after the phrase was first uttered, we know that it's still bad taste to "frighten the horses." Therefore, the 24/7 backwoods handgun needs to be concealable in all circumstances where it is legal for the wearer to carry it so.



Massad Ayoob

Which leads me to a recommendation some might find unconventional.

The nominee is...

When you look at the job description above, it's hard to come up with a better "always" gun than the Ruger SP101, caliber .357 Magnum. I would choose the version with the 2¼-inch barrel. This will fit nicely in the pocket of jacket, pants, or overalls. It fits in the glove box of the smallest farm vehicle. It's compact enough for an ankle or boot holster.

No, you won't be dropping deer at a hundred yards with it. But if you've learned to shoot it well and you get a shot at a deer standing broadside to you at a quarter of that distance, you should be able to kill it cleanly with a lung cavity shot. We're not talking handgun hunting, here. We're talking an emergency utility handgun that's always with you. Hence, the short barrel.



Both for snag-free drawing from concealment and for civil liability reasons, author favors spurless hammer "double action only" model as issued by his police department (right) to conventional model (left).

Gun experts have long touted the .357 Magnum as the most versatile of handgun calibers, because a gun chambered for that round can also fire the .38 Special or, for that matter, the .38 Long Colt cartridge that the sport of Cowboy Action Shooting recently resurrected from obsolescence. Just how versatile is that? Let's take a look.

.357 versatility

Start with the .38 Special mid-range wadcutter, a flat-nose bullet weighing 148 grains and trundling out of the short barrel at something like 700 feet per second. Its sharp edges chop a clean hole in the full bullet diameter. There are those at the International Wound Ballistics Association who think that makes it just fine as a self-defense load against criminal assault. Certainly, it's the lightest kicking load you can put in a .38 Special or .357 Magnum revolver.

It's also hell for accurate. When the SP101 came out (in 1988, as a .38 Special) gun expert Wiley Clapp tested one with a Ransom machine rest. He put ten consecutive shots into a group that measured 1.33 inches, center to center. "This is superlative accuracy," he wrote at the time in

inch. The group wasn't as good as the machine rest's, obviously, but it was damned impressive for a short barrel revolver that requires a long pull of the trigger for each shot. Some guns have great inherent mechanical accuracy, but don't let the shooter deliver it because the sights or the trigger pull aren't good enough. The little Ruger has a smooth double action trigger stroke, and big sights that are easy to hold on target. It's a user-friendly revolver in more ways than one. Within ten paces, the SP101 loaded with .38 wadcutters lets you nail a bushytail in the head for a painless kill that doesn't waste the key ingredient of squirrel stew.

Jack the power up a notch, to .38 Special defense loads. In a standard pressure round with mild recoil, experience tells me that you can't do better than the 125 grain Federal Nyclad. It's nowhere near as accurate as the wadcutter, but much more dynamic in flesh. It's the defense load of choice for people sensitive to "kick."

Next up on the scale is +P .38 Special ammo. The 125 grain full- or partially-copper jacketed hot load has gotten rave reviews in some quarters,

Guns & Ammo. Who would argue?

The ammunition Wiley used that day was Federal Match. While preparing this article I shot some of the same stuff through my snub-nosed SP101. Five shots, double action, two-hand standing went into an inch and three-quarters. The best three measured three quarters of an

but I'm one of many old-timers who prefer the FBI load conceptualized in 1972, a 158 grain all-lead semiwadcutter hollowpoint at the accelerated velocity delivered by the +P pressures. With no tough copper jacket to peel back, the soft lead bullet almost always mushrooms, even when fired through short barrel guns and after passing through clothing. It kicks more than the lighter bullet +P loads, but I think the superior street-proven performance is worth it.

Then we get all the way up to the .357 Magnum. A 125 grain bullet that would be under a thousand feet per second in a +P .38 Special is running at 1400 to 1450 feet per second in the full Magnum loading when fired from a full size service revolver. Out of a snub, velocity drops to 1220 to 1300 foot-seconds or so. A generation of bad guys shot with this ammo out of the snub-nosed revolvers of detectives and off-duty cops never knew the difference. The 125 grain Magnum semi-jacketed hollowpoint earned a reputation for putting the bad guys down with a single hit better than any other load or caliber, irrespective of the barrel length of the revolver used.

This 125 grain Magnum load is what I would (and do) personally carry in the SP101 most of the time for defensive purposes. It's also devastating on vicious dogs. A friend of mine recently needed six fast shots with his .45 automatic to stop a charging German Shepherd, and another had to empty his high capacity 9mm into a big Chow that was attacking him before the beast gave up the ghost. But the combination of a hollow-nosed bullet about .357 inches in diameter, weighing 125 grains and traveling 1200 to 1400 feet per second has earned a reputation for fast, one-shot stops of the biggest and most vicious canines.

Those bullets go into flesh about ten to twelve inches and stop, with a dramatically wide wound channel

along the way. That's what makes them ideal for anti-personnel work against facing, erect bipeds, or for a shot through the brisket of an oncoming Hound of the Baskervilles, or to put through the breastbone of a mountain lion that's on top of you. If you're in big bear country, though, you'll need something that penetrates deeper.

In 1935, when Smith & Wesson introduced the .357 Magnum cartridge, the only available load was an all-lead semi-wadcutter bullet at a red-line velocity of 1500 feet per second. No responsible manufacturer loads that bullet to that high a velocity now. At the time, though, it went deep enough to kill the biggest grizzly and Kodiak bears, which admittedly was something of a stunt.

Father Hubbard, the legendary "Glacier Priest" of Alaska, killed many a large critter to help feed native families and his own group. He guided S&W's Douglas Wesson on the hunts in which both men shot enough big bears and moose with .357 Magnums to prove that they could cleanly kill such huge game. However, both used guns with barrel lengths ranging from 6 to 8³/₈ inches; remember that in a short barrel "pocket gun," you lose some velocity and therefore lose some power.

It takes a lot to ruin a bruin, and a .357 Magnum revolver is on the light side no matter how you cut it. Today's jacketed soft-nose 158 grain bullets will penetrate much deeper than any hollowpoint, and some specialty loads are available that go deeper yet. On an animal this big, with a skull this hard and thick, penetration is what you want. In my forays to Alaska thus far, I've been doing police training stuff or shooting trial stuff in the cities, and carried one or another .45 auto. When I go for myself and travel the boondocks, the .44 Magnum will be at my side...and my backup gun will be this SP101, loaded with deep-penetrating .357

Magnum GameStopper ammo by Pro-Load.

You'll have to look far and wide to find a more hard-headed creature than the Cape buffalo of Africa. Legendary international big game hunter Elgin Gates was treed by one, and saved his life by shooting it through the brain with armor-piercing bullets from his Smith & Wesson .357 Magnum. I believe it had a four-inch barrel. Today, such ammunition is forbidden to private citizens, but a load like the GameStopper should punch through the skull of the toughest animal that's likely to come after you in the United States.

Now, let's go back down the scales. Down the power scale, down the evolutionary scale, and down from critters that tower over you like bears to the ones that slither up and bite you on the calf. If you're in poisonous snake country, there is a very limited range at which you are likely to employ a firearm against said serpent.

If you see the snake at a distance, avoid it unless it's a matter of keeping your children safe and proactively destroying the creature. If a poisonous snake is close enough to bite you, you're going to have to get your gun out quick and hit a small target very fast. At snakebite range, the logical thing to have in the gun is snakeshot, which sends a cloud of tiny birdshot pellets out in a fan that is highly likely to nail the rattler before the rattlesnake nails you. Speer's .38/.357 snakeshot load is what I would have in the first one or two chambers in line to come up under the firing pin if I was carrying the SP101 in poisonous snake country.

Short barrel revolver advantages

One thread runs repeatedly through tales of survivors mauled by bears and the great cats. Many were holding their rifle or shotgun when the animal took them down, and could



The size of the little Colt Detective Special .38, the Ruger SP101 carries five rounds of powerful .357 Magnum. Note ample steel between chambers in cylinder for maximum safety.

not bring the muzzle to bear on their four-legged tormentor because the long gun was trapped between their body and that of the beast. Even a long barrel handgun could be hard to get out and into action.

The short barrel revolver is faster to clear from holster or pocket. It is faster to get pointed at the vitals of the creature on top of you. In a great many animal attack cases, the defender or protector has to shove the gun muzzle right up against the critter's body. If you do this with most semi-automatic pistols, it will push the barrel slide assembly rearward and "out of battery." That is, the parts are pushed out of the alignment in which they must be for the gun to fire. This won't happen with the revolver, whose barrel is rigidly fixed to the frame and ahead of the firing mechanism.

Something else can happen with a muzzle contact wound. As the muzzle blast roars into the soft tissue of the body, a "blowback" effect occurs in which tissue, fur, and viscous blood can be blown into the open mechanism of the pistol in the instant in which its slide is cycling. This matter can block the slide from returning to battery, and prevent the auto pistol from firing subsequent shots if needed. This does not, of course, occur with the revolver. A friend of mine, a



Good, better, best. From bottom up: Federal Nyclad standard pressure .38 hollowpoint, author's preferred defense load for the recoil-sensitive; +P .38 Special, which hits harder; and the decisively fight-stopping 125 grain Magnum hollowpoint.

CIA agent who has had to do more “wet work” than he would have liked in the service of his country, knows how that term came about. After the first time he had to shove a gun muzzle into an opponent’s body and pull the trigger, the backblast taught him to always use a powerful revolver for this sort of work.

It happens with animals, too. A friend of mine was attacked by a Briard, a rare variation of the huge Bouvier des Flandres. As the dog’s open jaws approached his crotch, he shoved the muzzle of his Colt Commander against its neck and fired. The bullet killed the creature instantly and saved my friend from injury, but fur and blood and tissue blasted back into the muzzle/barrel bushing area of the .45 auto as it cycled, jamming the gun. He was using the Glaser Safety Slug, a lightweight, pre-fragmented projectile at very high muzzle velocity.

It can even happen beyond contact distance. Some years ago, I had occasion to put down a large beef critter. A 190 grain Super Vel .45 hollowpoint to the brain killed it instantly, which was a good thing. The back-

splash of blood and brain matter out of the entry wound not only soaked me but adhered to the exposed barrel of my Colt Government Model autoloader as it cycled from the recoil, and jammed the gun. A quick slap with the heel of my support hand’s palm on the back of the slide compressed the tissue and drove the gun back into bat-

ttery, but I had learned a lesson.

Suffice to say that if a living thing is on top of you and trying to kill you and your only chance is to shove your gun muzzle into that thing and pull the trigger several times, a revolver has a distinct advantage over an autoloading pistol.

The SP101 in particular

There are lots of small .357 Magnum revolvers available today. What’s so special about this one in particular?

It’s no secret that I had a hand in convincing the late, great Bill Ruger to make this gun in .357 Magnum instead of just .38 Special. If you’re interested, you can read about it in R.L. Wilson’s superb book *Ruger and His Guns* (Simon & Schuster, 1996, page 193) or in *Complete Book of Handguns 2003*, which should be on the newsstands about the time you read this or shortly thereafter. However, ego investment in the gun isn’t the reason I recommend it. Practicality is.

The SP101 was the first successful “baby” .357 Magnum, small enough

for pocket or ankle carry. It was not the last. Rossi, Smith & Wesson, and Taurus have all since produced short barrel, five shot, small frame .357 Magnums. Most of them are lighter and kick much more viciously, however, and none of them seem to have quite the deliverable accuracy, the mix of user-friendliness and inherent mechanical ability to get those powerful bullets delivered not only fast but straight. The Colt Magnum Carry came closest, but has been out of production for some time.

At slightly over 26 ounces in weight, the Ruger is a solid little gun that absorbs recoil well. It is aided in this by well thought out forward balance and particularly by Ruger’s trademark “live feel” grips, which tend to soak up the kick to a degree that has to be felt to be appreciated. Bill Ruger told *Shooting Times* staffer Jim Bequette, in one of the last interviews he granted before his death, that the secret to the SP101’s success was that “Those damned cushioned grips make it the easiest small-frame .357 to shoot.”

How good is the SP101? Good enough that in 2002, my police department adopted the spurless hammer double action only version with short barrel and issued it to all sworn personnel for backup and off duty use. Each officer is issued Black Hills 125 grain Magnum ammunition and an Alessi hideout holster. I had often carried one of these little guns for backup anyway. I feel good to know that my brother officers have backup as solid as this.

It would feel good to know that you had it too. Δ

**Wanna read more
about guns
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THE IRREVERENT JOKE PAGE

(Believing it is important for people to be able to laugh at themselves, this is a continuing feature in *Backwoods Home Magazine*. We invite readers to submit any jokes you'd like to share to *BHM*, P.O. Box 712, Gold Beach, OR 97444. There is no payment for jokes used.)

Did you hear about the teacher who was helping one of her kindergarten students put on his boots? He asked for help and she could see why. With her pulling and him pushing, the boots still didn't want to go on. When the second boot was on, she had worked up a sweat.

She almost whimpered when the little boy said, "Teacher, they're on the wrong feet." She looked and sure enough, they were.

It wasn't any easier pulling the boots off than it was putting them on. She managed to keep her cool as together they worked to get the boots back on—this time on the right feet. He then announced, "These aren't my boots."

She bit her tongue rather than get right in his face and scream, "Why didn't you say so?" like she wanted to. Once again she struggled to help him pull the ill-fitting boots off. He then said, "They're my brother's boots. My Mom made me wear them."

She didn't know if she should laugh or cry. She mustered up the grace and courage she had left to wrestle the boots on his feet again. She said, "Now, where are your mittens?"

He said, "I stuffed them in the toes of my boots..."

Her trial starts next month.

Three Irishmen, Paddy, Mike, and Sean, were stumbling home from the pub late one night and found themselves on the road which led past an old graveyard.

"Come have a look over here," says Paddy, "It's Michael O'Grady's grave, God bless his soul, he lived to the ripe old age of 87."

"That's nothing," says Mike, "here's one named Patrick O'Toole. It says here that he was 95 when he died."

Just then, Sean yells out, "But here's a fellow who died when he was 145 years old!"

"What was his name?" asks Paddy.

Sean lights a match to see what else is written on the stone marker, and exclaims, "Miles, from Dublin."

Dear Abby:

I have been engaged for almost a year. I am to be married next month. My fiancée's mother is not only very attractive but really great and understanding. She is putting the entire wedding together and invited me to her place to go over the invitation list because it had grown a bit beyond what we had expected it to be. When I got to her place we reviewed the list and trimmed it down to just under a hundred ... then she floored me. She said that in a month I would be a married man and that before that happened, she wanted to have sex with me. Then she just stood up and walked to her bedroom and on her way said that I knew where the front door was if I wanted to leave. I stood there for about five minutes and finally decided that I knew exactly how to deal with this situation. I headed straight out the front door... There, leaning against my car was her husband, my father-in-law to be. He was smiling. He explained that they just wanted to be sure I was a good kid and would be true to their little girl. I shook his hand and he congratulated me on passing their little test. Abby, should I tell my fiancée what her parents did, and that I thought their "little test" was asinine and insulting to my character? Or should I keep the whole thing to myself including the fact that the reason I was walking out to my car was to get a condom?

A man was walking in the city, when he was accosted by a particularly dirty and shabby-looking bum who asked him for a couple of dollars for dinner.

The man took out his wallet, extracted two dollars and asked, "If I gave you this money, will you take it and buy whiskey?"

"No, I stopped drinking years ago," the bum said.

"Will you use it to gamble?"

"I don't gamble. I need everything I can get just to stay alive."

"Will you spend the money on greens fees at a golf course?"

"Are you MAD? I haven't played golf in 20 years!"

The man said, "Well, I'm not going to give you two dollars. Instead, I'm going to take you to my home for a terrific dinner cooked by my wife." The bum was astounded.

"Won't your wife be furious with you for doing that? I know I'm dirty, and I probably smell pretty bad."

The man replied, "Hey, man, that's OK! I just want her to see what a man looks like who's given up drinking, gambling, and golf!"

Once upon a time there were three little pigs. The straw pig, the stick pig, and the brick pig.

One day this nasty old wolf came up to the straw pig's house and said, "I'm gonna huff and puff and blow your house down." And he did. So the straw pig went running over to the stick pig's house and said, "Please let me in, the wolf just blew down my house." So the stick pig let the straw pig in. Just then the wolf showed up and said, "I'm gonna huff and puff and blow your house down." And he did. So the straw pig and the stick pig went running over to the brick pig's house and said, "Let us in, let us in, the big bad wolf just blew our houses down!" So the brick pig let them in just as the wolf showed up. The wolf said, "I'm gonna huff and puff and blow your house down."

The straw pig and the stick pig were so scared. But the brick pig picked up the phone and made a call. A few minutes passed and a big, black stretch limo pulled up. Out stepped two massive pigs in pin striped suits and fedora hats. These pigs went over to the wolf, grabbed him by the neck and beat the stuffing out of him. Then one of them pulled out a gun, stuck it in his mouth and fired, killing the wolf. Then they got back into their limo and drove off. The straw pig and stick pig were amazed!

"Who the heck were those guys?" they asked.

"Those were my cousins from Jersey ... the Guinea Pigs."

Two men working in a factory were talking. "I know how to get some time off," said one.

"How are you going to do that?"

"Watch," he said, and climbed up on a rafter. The foreman asked what he was doing up there, and the man replied, "I'm a lightbulb."

"I think you need some time off," the foreman said, and the first man walked out of the factory. After a moment, the second man followed him.

"Where do you think you're going?" the foreman shouted.

"I can't work in the dark," he said.

At 2:00 a.m. a cop saw a man, obviously drunk, walking down the street. He pulled over, stepped out of his vehicle and confronted the drunk.

"Where are you going?" he asked the man.

"To a lecture," the drunk replied.

"And who," the officer asked looking at his watch, "gives lectures at 2:00 a.m.?"

"My wife."

Nearly every man is a firm believer in heredity until his son makes a fool of himself.

Q. Why do women close their eyes when they kiss?
A. They can't stand to see a man having a good time.

The Ant and the Grasshopper—CLASSIC VERSION:

The ant works hard in the withering heat all summer long, building his house and laying up supplies for the winter. The grasshopper thinks he's a fool, and laughs and dances and plays the summer away.

Come winter, the ant is warm and well fed. The grasshopper has no food or shelter, so he dies out in the cold.

The Ant and the Grasshopper—MODERN VERSION:

The ant works hard in the withering heat all summer long, building his house and laying up supplies for the winter. The grasshopper thinks he's a fool, and laughs and dances and plays the summer away.

Come winter, the shivering grasshopper calls a press conference and demands to know why the ant should be allowed to be warm and well fed while others less fortunate are cold and starving. National News shows up to provide pictures of the shivering grasshopper next to a video of the ant in his comfortable home with a table filled with food. The nation is stunned by the sharp contrast. How can this be, that in a country of such wealth, this poor grasshopper is allowed to suffer so?

The opposition parties stage a demonstration in front of the ant's house, where the news stations film the group singing, "We Shall Overcome."

A local member of government rants in an interview with a celebrity news reporter that the ant has gotten rich off the backs of grasshoppers and calls for an immediate tax hike on the ant to make him pay his "fair share."

Finally, the Government drafts the Economic Equity and Anti Grasshopper Act, retroactive to the beginning of the summer. The ant is fined for failing to hire green bugs for help and, having nothing left to pay his retroactive taxes, his home is confiscated by the government.

The story ends as we see the grasshopper finishing up the last bits of the ant's food while the government house he is in, which just happens to be the ant's old house, crumbles around him because he doesn't maintain it.

The ant has disappeared in the snow. The grasshopper is found dead in a drug related incident and the house, now abandoned, is taken over by a gang of spiders who terrorize the once peaceful neighborhood.

Living the outlaw life:

William Jefferson Bush vs. George W. Clinton: 11 reasons why Bush is as bad as Clinton and probably worse by Claire Wolfe

Well. So now we've had a Republican president for two years. Ding-dong the Wicked Clinton is Dead. We've also had a Republican Congress for much of the last decade. The result? The government has been shrinking as fast as a popped balloon. Bureaucracy, taxes, and regulation are now minor factors in American life. The "feel-good" (and cost-a-lot) social programs of the left are on their way into history's trash can. Clinton-era gun laws were rapidly repealed. Privacy is ensured. The *Bill of Rights* rules the land and ...

Oh, yeah. I guess it hasn't exactly worked out that way, has it?

Not quite.

In fact, there's only a handful of ways in which George W. Bush is substantially different than Bill Clinton. And in many of those ways, he's worse.

Both Clinton and Bush:

1. Are totally committed to Big Government

Time to celebrate! (If you're a fan of government growth, that is.) Big-spending Clinton may be gone. But federal expenditures are poised to exceed \$2 trillion for the first time this year—if they didn't already do it in 2002. You thought Republicans were for smaller government? No Republican since Warren G. Harding has decreased the federal budget—and Republicans have presided over three of the four largest budget increases in history.

During Bush's first 18 months, the private sector grew at a measly 0.5 percent per year. Government, however, grew at a roaring 6 percent—a rate that will double the size of the federal government in 12 years.

But of course much of this increase is necessitated by the War on Terrorism. Or is it? Let's take a look at what our very hard-earned tax dollars have been buying in the last couple of years:

- A \$24 million retirement facility for chimpanzees

- \$2 million to house a worm collection at the Smithsonian

- A \$205 million bailout and \$100 million loan for the ever-failing Amtrak

- \$5 billion in emergency aid and \$10 billion in loans to U.S. airlines—which were already failing before 9-11.

- \$62 million to promote the Sacajawea dollar coin—and oh, my, hasn't that effort worked impressively?

- A \$10 million increase in the budget for the National Endowment for the Arts (up to \$126 million) so people can be forced to pay even more for public art that they find incomprehensible or offensive.

- \$700+ million in ethanol subsidies.

- \$87 billion in various kinds of corporate welfare

- Billions in bail-outs, handouts, loans, and sundry fan-cies to Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Georgia (the old Soviet one), Pakistan, the Philippines, North Korea (yes, that member of the Axis of Evil), Columbia, Turkey, Jordan, Egypt, Israel, and a variety of other countries and countrylets in Africa, the Caribbean, South America, and the former Soviet Union. (Did I leave anybody out, here? I probably did. But you can rest assured the Bush administration didn't.)

- And finally let's not forget the \$43 million Mr. Bush sent to the Taliban (for the Drug War, of course) just before he began bombing the Taliban further into the stone age than they already were.

The Bush administration and Congress increased the U.S. debt from \$5.95 trillion to \$6.4 trillion. And as we speak, the administration is asking for another increase. Your grandchildren—and their grandchildren—are really going to love the Bush administration as they struggle to pay off its debts.

2. Are totally committed to Big Brotherment

When it comes to implementing Big Brother policies, Bush makes Clinton look like a civil libertarian. Both helped impose federal control of all of our once-private

medical records. Both support social-security-based, federally standardized drivers licenses that are steadily morphing into biometric national ID cards. But it took a freedom-loving Republican administration to come up with:

- Total Information Awareness. A Pentagon plan to monitor your purchases, travel, gun ownership, medical care, schooling and everything else you ever do. The government will apply algorithms to this mass of data to determine which of us are “suspicious” and deserve to be investigated. Real evil-doers will change their behavior to avoid this profiling. Innocent people will be harassed endlessly—and warrantlessly.

- Expansion of CALEA (the Communication Assistance to Law Enforcement Act) to the Internet. The Clinton administration pushed through this law requiring phone companies and phone-equipment makers to render their systems “wiretap-ready” (thus making warrants for telephone taps nothing but a quaint formality). But it took the Bush administration to decree (without further legislation) that CALEA applied to the Internet—and had all along. This was just the first step in a rapidly advancing plan to monitor all Internet activity, including the content of your e-mails and the Web sites you visit. (Already, scattered reports from the real world indicate that criticizing President Bush in your e-mails constitutes “suspicious” activity.)

- Biometric international travel documents. It was Bush, in his Homeland Security plan, and not Clinton, who pledged to work with foreign governments to make sure that all travel documents—including our own—are loaded with biometric identifiers—which again will do nothing to stop terrorists but will enable governments to better track—and eventually control the movements of—innocent millions.

3. Are totally committed to Big Motherment

Federal spending on “social welfare” programs grew a whopping \$51 billion during the first six years of Clinton’s reign (according to Stephen Moore of the Club for Growth). But guess what? Social welfare spending grew by \$96 billion during George W. Bush’s first two years in office!

In many cases, Bush has been increasing social-welfare spending faster than defense spending, despite the War on Terrorism.

One of Bush’s first acts was to create his “Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives,” through which he can hand taxpayers’ money to religious organizations. This means many more groups will be clamoring for your money (environmental organizations are already queuing up to qualify as religious, believe it or not). Questions of separation of church and state aside, “faith-based” tax spending will also ultimately destroy private charity by

larding it with expensive and inflexible government regulations.

Additional Bush “accomplishments” in welfare expansion:

- The Farm Security Act—\$180 billion over the next 10 years for the country’s wealthiest farmers
- Proposed \$100 billion for prescription-drug benefits to seniors

- \$6 billion for day-care subsidies

- Doubling the federal “education” budget over the next six years (remember, the federal government educates nobody; it merely aims to centrally control education)

- A \$44 million increase in the budget of the National Health Service Corps, whatever that may be. Whatever it is, \$44 million represents about a 30 percent budget increase for it.

- \$560 million for the USA Freedom Corps. This includes \$230 million for Clinton’s AmeriCorps—an organization noted for its work enrolling Americans in tax-funded social-welfare programs.

- \$900 million distributed (in 2002 alone) for the President’s “Reading First” plan. This plan—another foolish Clinton boondoggle to help shift attention from the colossal failure of government schooling—has been dusted off, given a new shine, and claimed by the Bush administration as its own.

4. Consider the *Bill of Rights* disposable

Can a person in America be indefinitely “detained” by the government without trial, without charges, without bail, and without being allowed to face his accusers, see the evidence against him, or have an attorney? Not according to the *Bill of Rights*. But both the Clinton and Bush administrations said otherwise. Clinton held a number of foreign nationals incommunicado for years during his regime. But in a typical pattern of escalation, Bush has turned unconstitutional detention into a full-scale “parallel legal system”—and applied it to American citizens. If you are declared an “enemy combatant” (and how many of us “anti-government” types could easily be slapped with that label in the next “emergency”?), Bush believes the *Bill of Rights* no longer applies to you.

The Bush administration has also submitted a court brief in favor of allowing police to forcibly question suspects even when they’ve begged to be let alone, even when they’re wounded and in agony. In Afghanistan, the CIA has admitted regularly torturing captives. One official involved in this process told reporters, “If you don’t violate somebody’s human rights some of the time, you probably aren’t doing your job.”

The Fourth Amendment—forbidding random searches and seizures—was on its way out long before G.W. Bush took office, thanks to the Drug War. But it took Bush’s

USA-Patriot Act to drive the final nail into the coffin of individual privacy and the protection of warrants. “Warrants? We don’t need no esteenkin’ warrants. All we gotta do is say you’re a terrorism suspect.” Thanks to Bush’s *USA-Unpatriotic Act*, feds can even warrantlessly order your librarian reveal what books you read—and if she tells you you’re under investigation, she’s committing a federal crime.

The American public cheers all this. But someday we’ll say, “When they came for the dopers, I didn’t protest... When they came for the Muslims, I didn’t protest ...”

5. ... Including the Second Amendment

Speaking of budget increases, one of Bush’s first initiatives was to allocate \$533 million over two years for *Project Safe Neighborhoods*—“America’s Network Against Gun Violence.”

Do you remember all those Clinton-era gun laws that the Republicans cried were unconstitutional and would only ensnare the innocent, not the guilty? Well, with *Project Safe Neighborhoods*, Bush has dedicated 700 federal and state-level prosecutors to the sole task of enforcing them—and all the many unconstitutional gun laws passed before them. Bush has also called for federal tracking of all firearms transfers, such as those between a father and son. (The highly misleading buzz-phrase for this is “closing the gun-show loophole.”)

For more detail on the Bush administration’s hypocrisy on guns, see my article “Soothed into losing: Politicians, lies, and the Second Amendment” in the November/December 2002 issue of *Backwoods Home Magazine*.

6. Like to bomb countries that can’t hit back

Both Bush and Clinton bombed countries without Congress declaring war. (For Clinton, it was aspirin factories in the Sudan and bridges in Kosovo. For Bush, wedding parties in Afghanistan. And by the time you read this, possibly in Iraq, as well.) Both killed masses of innocents without achieving their stated aims. Both chose countries that had limited ability to strike back. (Why Iraq, for instance, and not North Korea—a member of Bush’s “Axis of Evil” that we know has nuclear capability and is flaunting attempts to monitor it?)

Does the U.S. have real enemies? Is the pope Catholic? But is the U.S. government rooting enemies out with this kind of random force—or only creating more of them?

And oh yes, speaking of “enemies” ... Both Clinton and Bush actively worked to circumvent the *Posse Comitatus Act* so that the military can be used against American citizens.

Bush’s \$379 billion Defense Department budget for 2003 has jumped \$48 billion from last year and is more than \$100 billion higher than Clinton’s final military budgets. Despite much talk of our military “unreadiness” during the Clinton era, Clinton’s military budgets were already far and away the highest in the world. The U.S. military budget is now bigger than those of the next 14 nations, combined.

7. Secretly serve interests of the elite

When watchdogs demanded to know what went on in Hillary Clinton’s infamous secret health-care planning sessions, the Clinton administration stonewalled. They said they simply hadn’t kept any records of who attended or what was discussed. This was their attempt to disguise the fact that the “Hillarycare” scheme to make over the entire U.S. medical system was a gift to the insurance industry and bureaucrats, in which physicians and patients were to have little say.

When Congress, investigating corrupt energy company Enron, asked the Bush administration what went on in secret meetings to set U.S. energy policy, the president (whose fortune is based on oil) and the vice president (whose fortune is based on oil) simply refused to say. Why?

When the House Judiciary Committee, in the summer of 2002, asked the Bush Justice Department how they planned to use the roving wiretaps, library—and bookstore—snooping authority, and other unconstitutional powers Congress had rushed to grant them in the *USA-Patriot Act*, again, they again refused to answer. Why?

When Bush finally yielded to demands that he allow an independent commission to investigate the terror attacks of September 11, 2001, he chose that master of secrecy and coverups, Henry Kissinger, to lead the effort. Kissinger was forced to resign due to conflicts of interest between the investigation and his secret list of international clients. (You really have to wonder what kind of clients could cause a conflict of interest in investigating terrorism. Better yet, wonder why Bush would choose such a man in the first place.)

8. Are boldfaced liars

Clinton “did not have sex with that woman, Ms. Lewinsky.” He changed his stories on various scandals more often than a weasly felon in an interrogation room. And he quibbled over the meaning of the word “is.” How embarrassing! Like having an adolescent boy for president.

How refreshing to have a president who doesn’t (as far as we know) lie about what he does with interns and cigars.

No, Bush lies only about more serious matters—Iraq, for instance. When he claimed that Iraq had a fleet of unmanned aircraft capable of targeting the United States,

he lied. When he claimed that the International Atomic Energy Agency reported that Iraq was six months away from having a working atomic weapon, he lied. No, no one could suppose that Iraq is a friend to the U.S. We can be fairly sure it does have chemical and biological weapons capability—because the U.S. supplied it (shortly before Bush, Sr. decided Saddam was an incarnation of Hitler). Many Arab nations, including our “friend,” Saudi Arabia, no doubt are hotbeds of terrorist planning against us. But if George W. Bush wants us to risk our security and our sons and daughters fighting Saddam Hussein, he should at least tell us the truth about his reasons.

His lies are one way in which Bush is actually worse than Clinton. He’s worse in other ways, as well.

9. Bush is turning government schools into military recruitment programs

In his “*No Child Left Behind Act*,” Bush not only increased federal spending on education from \$39.9 billion to \$44.5 billion (and remember, the Department of Education doesn’t educate anybody). But he turned government schools into military recruiting centers. Government high schools are now required to hand students’ names, addresses, and phone numbers over to military recruiters, unless their parents specifically opt out.

Bill Clinton didn’t use schools as a source of cannon fodder. But Adolph Hitler did.

10. Bush is less sleazy than Clinton

In the sleaze department, it would be hard to top Clinton. Bush looks like a Boy Scout by comparison. But that’s not necessarily a good thing.

Conservatives are so enamored of the concept of “moral character” that they forget to watch what this particular character actually does. He doesn’t boff interns, therefore it’s okay for him to boff innocent civilians in foreign lands. Bush doesn’t sell access to the White House for \$300,000 (although the Republican National Committee regularly sells access to Republican politicians), therefore, it’s okay for him to sell out the *Bill of Rights*. Bush doesn’t hand secret weapons systems over to the Chinese, therefore it’s okay for him to persecute thousands of Americans for mere ownership of weapons.

Darned tootin’, if we had to choose between a clean-living tyrant and a decadent tyrant who plotted invasions while interns knelt between his knees, I’d go for Mr. Clean. But I’d much rather put up with a decadent, corrupt slimeball who respected and upheld the principles of liberty than either of these bad choices.

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11. Bush uses the PR value of being a “wartime” president to take America over the line into being a police state

Forbidding granny to carry knitting needles on a plane doesn’t make us safe from Osama bin Laden. Having access to your medical records can’t help uncover the next terrorist plot. Monitoring the e-mail and Web surfing of millions of harmless folks doesn’t protect against a few thousand criminals. These random acts, in fact divert resources and attention from effective investigations of real evildoers. These things all make us less safe while also making us less free.

But gosh, all this random snooper is to “make America secure,” so let’s not ask questions. We’ve all got to “pull together for our country,” so let’s intimidate or lock up anybody who utters a criticism. It’s the “patriotic thing to do,” so strip down to your underwear at the airport. “We’re at war” (even though we’re not), so let federal agents search your home without a warrant and don’t worry about that outdated old *Bill of Rights* thing. It’s just a piece of paper, anyway.

I could go on. I haven’t even mentioned the Department of Homeland Security—which the American people would never have allowed Bill Clinton to create because they’d have seen it for the big government power grab that it is. I haven’t mentioned how it was born via passage of a 482-page bill that nobody had read. Haven’t mentioned how the bill authorized a whole new group of federal “inspectors” to go armed and conduct raids without warrants. Or how the bill granted the Department of Health and Human Services the power to force all Americans to take the smallpox vaccine—not in event of a biowar attack or known epidemic, but merely if the HHS bureaucrats foresee the “potential” for a public-health threat. Or that the bill contained such typical, elitist, secretive provisions as the “Eli Lilly Protection Act”—preventing parents of autistic children from suing the vastly wealthy drug-maker whose vaccines they suspect of destroying their children’s lives.

Yes, America has ruthless enemies, and they’re hard to fight because they’re hidden and widely dispersed. But none of this vast, looming expansion of federal control is targeted at them. It’s targeted at us—millions and millions of ordinary Americans whom our rulers (and I use that term advisedly) distrust and believe they need to monitor endlessly.

About a year ago, I co-authored (with Aaron Zelman) a book called *The State vs the People: The Rise of the American Police State*. Aaron and I maintained that although the U.S. was moving in the direction of becoming a police state, it hadn’t yet become one. (A police state is a

very specific form of government, not just a synonym for tyranny or brutality.)

That's changed. Today, the United States has the complete framework of a police state—secret police, warrantless searches, all-pervasive spying, limitless government, limited individual rights, cowering or mindless obedience, and more. Unless we say NO, the complete edifice of tyranny will gradually be built on this framework until America looks creepily like East Germany built large.

Bill Clinton may have ruled a police state in his dreams. But our scorn and protests held him back. It's George W. Bush—moral, conservative, Republican George Bush, with the devoted support of “conservatives” and “patriots” everywhere—who's built the foundations of a police state on the ashes of American freedom.

For further reading see:

The Bill of Rights Defense Committee:
<http://www.bordc.org/Theissues.htm>

“Keep Big Brother's Hands off the Internet”: <http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itgic/1097/ijge/gj-7.htm> (This is master hypocrite Attorney General John Ashcroft's ringing defense of the Fourth Amendment—shortly before he helped destroy it.)

The Liberty Vault: President Bush's Big Government Accomplishments: <http://libertyvault.com/gwb.html>

Federal Budgets Since 1901:
<http://www.polisci.com/almanac/economics/budget.htm> Δ

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A comfortable base camp

while building your backwoods home

By Jackie Clay

It would be nice if we could find a “pre-built” self-reliant homestead when we decided it was time for a move to a safer, more quiet, saner lifestyle. There would be a dependable water source—developed, of course. Gardens would flourish on the gentle, south-facing slopes. A picturesque, sturdy fence would contain pastures for our livestock. There would be a chicken coop, barn perhaps, and other outbuildings. And there would be a home. Not just any home, mind you, but a true independent home, built for the self-sufficient family, complete with huge pantry, off-grid power, country kitchen, and roomy enough for the whole family to spread out and enjoy life.

Unfortunately, these places are very rare, seldom for sale, and if you should find one, it's not likely to be affordable. So for most folks their off-the-beaten-path-homestead home starts out as acres of bare, totally undeveloped land. Hoping to build their dream homestead on this raw land that they could afford, these families face tremendous challenges, especially if they must move onto this bare land while they build. (It's much easier to drive out to the new homestead on weekends and vacations,

building as you can afford and moving onto the land when the place is comfortably established and ready to run.)

Challenges come in the form of living in cramped “camping-out” quarters for months or even years, while building a home. You might have to adjust to living without the so-called

travel trailers, buses, and tents, complete with five or more dogs, small children, and memories of city living.

Wait! Am I saying you have no chance of making it on a raw piece of wild land? Most definitely *not*. We've also seen folks with very little money and those same dreams succeed beyond their wildest expectations. All

over the country are huge success stories from new homesteaders who built their dream homestead from scratch and are now living out their fantasies of raising their own fresh food, making cheeses and other dairy products, putting up the harvest of their bountiful gardens and fields every fall, and watching their children and grandchildren grow into reliable,



My son, Bill's, new log home under construction, and to the left the “shack” he lived in while he built his home

modern conveniences that were previously taken for granted. You may have to get used to being wet, cold, frightened by nature so close at hand, and living with very little money.

Over the years of living very remote ourselves, we've seen folks come and go. Like us, they had big dreams and plans. But unfortunately, their dreams and plans were not often realistic, given their experience in roughing it and hard living. I've seen them try to live in poorly built straw bale and sheet plastic huts with dirt floors, and I've seen them try to live in tipis,

loving, happy young men and women.

The difference between the failures, who end up going back to the rat race and that hated job, and these successful families usually lies in one word. Preparation.

And the most important part of that preparation is developing a plan on how your family will live while you build your home. Too often, a family does not realize just how long it actually takes to build your own home from scratch, to the point it is ready to move into. Nearly everyone figures



The wall tent is always pitched first in a new camp. Here, my mom and son, David, help unpack the kitchen gear.

one good summer's work will do the job. But, usually, this is a very optimistic guess, unless the family is skilled in construction, has good tools, and enough money to see the job through.

Most of us do not have enough money to hire a contractor and sit by while they build our new home. Nor do many of us wish to go that route, much preferring the do-it-yourself, hands-on, sweat equity way of building.

And many new back-to-the-landers are not skilled in construction, and must learn as they go, guided by good books and experienced friends and relatives.

So, what is a realistic time frame in building a home on the land? For a small, frame home, we would allow at least a full year, two if it was not possible to build during the winter. A log home, built from your own logs from the woods will take longer, often three years unless you have much experience and lots of help.

My oldest son, Bill, whose log home was featured in previous issues of *BHM*, is just putting the finishing touches on the inside of his gorgeous home. So far, he's

spent over three years on it, doing much of the work himself, while working full-time at another job. He is an experienced builder, from cement work through woodwork. An inexperienced builder, working full-time on the same home would probably

not be as far. Now this is a large home, being 3,500 square feet, but again, building just takes time. Usually much longer than most folks allow for.

Some families do somehow survive, while building their home, living in a tipi, yurt, tent or bus. But this is like playing Russian roulette. You may make it, but most do not. True, Indians lived their lives in tipis, Mongols lived in skin tents. One of my best friends in northern Minnesota, Nels Speese, came from a family who homesteaded in South Dakota. One of the first black pioneers in that area, his folks raised a family of 16 in a sod shack. And those kids grew up to be lawyers, doctors, and musicians.

But most people today are spoiled, just plain spoiled, and used to having money and all that money can buy. Today's average urban home is over 2,000 square feet. Three bedrooms and two baths is the low-norm. Nels' family had an outhouse, no bedrooms and a whole lot of happy kids.

It's culture shock for most city people to move from a three bedroom, two bath home with all the conveniences, to a tipi in the woods. And after a few weeks, the shock sets in with deadly force.

We feel that it is much, much better to plan on more permanent living quarters while building your home, something that your family can actually function in and remain comfortable. For us, the answer is a "shack," our humorous name for a small cabin which can be built in a few weeks' time for little cost and will let you live in comfort during the time it takes to build a home.

Later on, the shack can be used for a guest house, office, mother-in-law quarters or whatever else you can imagine. The main thing is that you have stable, warm, dry quarters in which to function normally.

We have taken this a step further, and bought a fixer-upper travel trailer in tough shape for \$700 and fixed it up over a year, equipping it for camping in bad weather while building our shack, with the trailer being temporarily attached to the shack for more living space. In this way, when

our present homestead sells, we will be ready to go onto our raw wilderness land, no matter what time of year it is, no matter what the weather. (Even if we must have a dozer or snowcat haul our trailer in to our building site, through deep snow.) No leaky tents for us. We're past thinking that's much fun.



Our old homestead way in the bush. It was our first shack.

The fixer-upper travel trailer

Some people planning to move to the land from the city may think, "Why not just buy a new travel trailer or RV to live in?" Even if you could afford it, we feel this is not in your best interest. For even during the summer, a nice travel trailer or other recreational vehicle, doesn't function the same on raw land as it does in a campground or in your city backyard. There is seldom any electricity available, and running a generator 12-7 is not only expensive, but a pain in the butt. And you do need power to run the water pump for a shower and the toilet, the fan for the furnace, the air conditioner, etc.

Of course, you can equip the RV with solar panels to do these things for you, but that's getting deep into your pocketbook.

We prefer to use the older, "beater" travel trailer as a sort of hard sided tent that we are not afraid to track construction dirt into in the evening or at lunchtime. This means using a solar shower instead of a 12 volt pump, using Coleman lamps at night for light and a bit of heat if necessary, keeping the sewage tank and grey water tanks empty (so they will not freeze) and hauling water in barrels so that our water lines do not freeze



Now used as a bunk house, this is where the folks who built our home lived while building the main house.

and break, as they most definitely will in cold winter weather no matter how much heat you run.

I heat water on the kitchen stove in tea kettles and a canning kettle so the water heater can remain drained in cold weather. We put a T in the waste line so we can run the sink drain water outside into a hole in the ground.

For refrigeration, we have a large propane unit. A single solar panel and occasional generator charging will let us use the 12-volt lights for occasional TV/VCR use, as we have a small

DC unit to watch an occasional movie. TV is not worth watching. It will also do away with much flashlight use for night time potty trips.

There is a toilet in the trailer, but we used an outhouse so we wouldn't have to depend on dump stations.

We do have a nice propane kitchen range with a large oven, a comfortable double bed, and a sofa sleeper. There is a small dining area in the kitchen and quite a lot of storage, including added pantry for my bulk dry supplies.

With a tarp hung outdoors, we'll have a snug picnic area to rest in during drizzly weather. I think this will be a very comfortable first base camp for our family of three and a couple of dogs while we put up our stick-built shack.

Priorities when moving onto raw land

We believe the first thing new homesteaders need to do when getting ready to move onto raw land is to have a good, hard, realistic look around their land for the ideal spot to site their home as well as that cozy shack they're going to live in while their home is being built.

Is there a good spring available, preferably uphill from the building site? Having running water, even to the shack, is a definite plus, reducing much of the work during the camping out stage. It is a simple matter to develop a spring and run black plastic



Older, beat-up travel trailer before complete remodel job

water line downhill to the buildings. This provides instant running water, under pressure of sorts (depending on how much higher the spring is than the home site). It may just run out the faucet, if the spring is only five or ten feet above the camp site, or blast out, if it is more than thirty feet above the lower end of the water line.

But if the spring (or other live water source) is at or below the best home site, the water can still be brought up to a storage tank by means of a small gasoline, 12-volt pump (such as a cheap bilge pump for boats) or even an electric sump pump run off a generator. Relatively inexpensive poly water tanks all the way up to 1,000-gallons, are available at most farm and ranch stores. Not having to bucket water is a huge plus. Of course, never drink untested water unless you have filtered it with a good quality filter that will remove bacteria and giardia cysts, or boiled it first.

When deciding on your future home site, consider the availability of



Our new garden is always one of our first priorities on new raw land. It feeds us.

relatively flat land for ease of construction, the later addition of gardens and orchards, support outbuildings, such as barns or chicken coops, and their network of fencing.

You may want your shack right next to the spot you plan on building your home. After all, it is convenient and you will spend little time “commuting” back and forth between the shack and your home site.

But you may want it a bit further off as we plan. In this way your home site will be free of the camp clutter, making it easier to get equipment and trucks to and from the area. Then, once your home is finally completed, you may want to use the shack as a guest house, art studio, or home for another family member. It might be best to have a little distance between the two for privacy and to ease the clutter of buildings crammed into one area.

Before building anything, check to see what, if any building permits are necessary in your area. You don't want to build, then be told you are in violation, and must tear down what you have already built, then rebuild to code. You might find it easier if you are building a “hunting shack”, instead of a homestead cabin.

Once you mentally lay out your homestead, haul in your camp trailer

(or tent, if you prefer). Next, locate a privy spot at least 100 feet from your water source. It should be private, on a small rise or gentle slope, and as rock-free as possible. Dig a deep hole. Four feet is a general minimum. A labor saver is to dig a hole for a two seater and only use one seat. When that part of the hole becomes filled up, simply move the seat over to the next area. Another hint is to deposit your toilet paper into a paper bag, not down the hole. This paper is later safely burned. This will save more than a year's worth of hole.

A good outhouse can be easily built in three days, and is a “must” when camping out.

Once the outhouse is finished, take time to straighten your travel trailer, even with the way your shack will be sited, and level it very well. Some folks even remove the tires and lower the trailer, blocking the axles with concrete blocks. If winter is coming, you might take the time to stack straw bales around the perimeter, as the floor will get cold enough to freeze mop water if you don't.

Once you have taken care of the water, outhouse, and trailer/tent camp, you are ready to begin work on your shack.



Bob and David (two, at the time) till up a spot for a new garden on the first day we moved in.



A good spring, located 50 feet above the outlet, will provide good pressure without a pump.

The shack

Now a shack can be many things or anything you desire, need, and can afford to build quickly. My son, Bill's, "shack" was a roomy two car garage, built on a slab out of "second" lumber and OSB (wafer board). Sided and painted, Bill divided the garage in two. Half was for storage, and the other half he made into a very comfortable apartment. He had no spring available, so he had a well drilled. The apartment has an indoor bathroom, kitchen, and living room/dining area, which also doubles as a bedroom. It is very cute and comfortable.

We also have friends who built small shacks on cement piers and even bought wooden storage buildings to live in while building their home. Remember there is truth to the old "cabin fever" stories. Winter is long, and when camping in a small shack, everybody tends to get on everybody else's nerves, especially when you throw in a teen who didn't really want to move to the back-

woods, a bouncing three-year-old or a dog who doesn't wipe his feet when he comes in—of course, my husband, Bob, doesn't either.

Ideally, the shack should be as large as you can afford and be able to build within a few weeks' time. This lets people have their own "space," and greatly reduces conflicts. Our shack will be 16 by 22 feet with the trailer being parked very close to it, giving another 32 by 8 feet of living space. The shack will have an 8-by-22-foot loft for storage and bedroom/play area for our 12-year-old son, David. After the shack is finished, complete with a stiff foam "airlock" between trailer and shack, we will add an 8-by-16-foot porch on the south side which will be enclosed and glassed. This will be a dining area and a place where I can start my garden plants in the spring.

Yes, we could get by in much less space. And if we need to we will. But this sized shack, planned out carefully, will let me have a small office space so I continue to work at my writing in relative comfort, provide two bedrooms, enough storage space that we will not have to rent a storage unit, have all our food conveniently inside and give us enough elbow room to be comfortable for the time it takes us to build our new log home.

We have even talked about adding a large log addition onto our shack and then siding the shack

with log siding to blend perfectly with the log work. There are many options available to building a shack.

There are a few considerations for shack living. One of the most important is insulation. Be sure you insulate the shack as well as you would your home. In such a small area, you'll heat with either propane or a small wood burner. There simply isn't room for a big wood stove, due to the safety space of at least two feet (with a back-board of heat-safe material, plus two inches of air space, behind that) behind the stove and three feet clear on both sides of the stove. The typical wood stove would require nearly one third of our planned shack just to heat it.

Instead, we will do as Bill did and hang a small wall propane heater on the shack wall and use our wood burning kitchen range for the primary heater. The wood kitchen range only

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needs about a foot behind it, as it does not get as hot behind it as a woodstove does. Nor does it require three feet on both sides, but only the side on which the fire box is located. Most kitchen stoves are positioned so that the fire box side is next to a door opening, neatly avoiding the use of additional space for safety.

Cooking with a wood kitchen range is nothing short of wonderful once you get the hang of it. (For instance, it takes about half an hour to pre-heat the oven for baking.) And the stove not only heats a room well in sub-zero cold, but provides enough space to keep two or more canning kettles full of water hot at all times, ready for showers, dish washing, or washing a load of clothes in a wringer washer, stashed out of the way in the corner pantry.

During the summer, you will want your wood burning kitchen range outside, under cover, or on the front porch. This is known as a summer kitchen, and eliminates heating up the shack during hot days and nights. When the weather turns cool, you can slide the stove into the kitchen, where you will again appreciate the heat.

A wringer washer is a must for shack living, as it uses only a few gallons of water, while getting the clothes cleaner than any conventional washer on the market. I use one every week, doing five loads of wash on six gallons of water. By starting out with the whites, then washing the cleaner lighter colors such as sheets, then T shirts and long johns, then heavier shirts, then "cleaner" jeans, work jeans, then rugs, all in the same water.

All laundry is hung on the lines, year around. At first they will freeze in the winter, but if left on the line for several days, they will freeze dry nicely. If you are in a hurry, you can



A 200-gallon Poly water tank makes hauling water to remote locations a snap. Bob is watering the horses.

bring in stiff laundry to finish drying on wooden racks or on lines inside.

When designing your shack, it's a good idea to allow for additions. Make sure there are adequate windows and at least two exits in case of fire. The windows are necessary, not only for light and ventilation, but also for mental well-being. Without adequate light, people become short-tempered and depressed. One thing your family does not need, when building your dream homestead, is feeling down and hopeless.

Tips for shack living

When you build your shack, cover the floor (insulated from below) with a sheet of vinyl flooring or at least paint the floor with a minimum of three coats of sturdy basement and floor paint. This is a *must* in order to keep the floor clean while you are working on your new home, tracking in construction dirt and Mother Nature's snow and mud. You just can't keep a plywood floor clean, especially in the kitchen where grease spots and other cooking spills quickly muck up the floor.

Adding an enclosed front porch is a great idea, as it gives you a place to sit down and take off muddy clothes and boots, greatly saving on cleaning

time. It also gives you a convenient place to store your kitchen wood while keeping it nice and dry. The enclosed porch also serves as an air lock, keeping drafts from chilling the whole cabin, every time someone opens the door.

If you don't have a travel trailer with a propane refrigerator, consider buying a used RV propane fridge instead of using coolers. During the summer, it costs over a dollar a day, plus gas to the nearest store where you can buy your ice and the travel time to get the ice

just to maintain one cooler. And that cooler will not cool food as well as a refrigerator. You'll have more milk and meat spoil in the cooler. The propane fridge is very easy to operate and very economical, using only a small pilot light-sized flame to cool. And the small freezer compartment sure comes in handy at times.

One reason I like shack living is that I can easily and quickly cook meals my family is used to having, bake when I need to, and even process food for home storage. While we build, I'm sure I will be putting up wild foods, such as blueberries, mushrooms, and venison.

Keep a clean camp, especially during the building time. Separate paper and plastic trash from unburnables. You can burn the paper and plastic (which you should try to keep to a minimum), a little at a time, in your kitchen range. Yes, I know, plastic generates toxic smoke. But in the landfill, it is not exactly a godsend, either. We feel that Mother Earth can better handle small bits of toxic material, rather than huge loads, dumped all in one spot.

The cans should be kept in a container, indoors, until they can be taken to the dump. If bagged up and stacked outdoors, you'll be inviting

bears and other critters to raid your camp. And they sometimes don't stop with outside bags.

Remember, you will probably be living in your shack for at least two years, during which time, you'll have to do all the mundane "normal" things you did back home: laundry, care of sick family, showers, baths, canning, jelly making, hobbies, such as putting puzzles together on rainy days, etc. It's nice to have things under control, with enough room to function.

Other assorted tips on moving back to the land

Finances: Today, there is hardly anything such as "living off the land." We all try to be self-reliant, but you'll always need a source of cash for things you can not grow or barter for. The doctor, dentist, lumberyard, feed mill, county tax office, and gas station will all expect cash for their services and merchandise.

So be sure you have at least a moderate savings or a way to make at least a modest living on your new homestead. And remember, many very rural areas have a pay rate that is half or less, of that back in the city rat race. Also expect a lengthy commute to that lower paying job.

Of course, there are many ways you can earn money from home, especially if you are skilled in some useful craft. Carpenters, stone masons, electricians, plumbers, small engine repairmen, heavy equipment operators, teachers, and other professional people can usually find work nearby with little problem.

The absolutely biggest problem we see in new back to the landers is flagrant misuse of money. This is a real *biggie*. We've seen it in literally hundreds of new homesteaders, and constantly watch for it in our own situation.

Number one is Mr. and Ms. Newcomer buying one expensive "toy" after another; ATVs, horses,

boats, computers, satellite TV systems, composting toilets, new this and that. And soon, the money's gone, and the stress begins.

So much time has been spent with the new toys that the shack didn't get built and the people are freezing in an RV or tent. And back to the city they go. It's all so sad. And unnecessary.

Financial priorities simply must be established and discussed openly with the whole family. Even children can understand how money must be used, if it is explained carefully and often.

And high on that list of priorities is a warm, dry, comfortable shack, in which to live while that new home is built. Remember, it may take years to finish a home, especially if one or more of the family members must be working full time or is going to public school. We deeply feel the loss of our son, David, while he is in school, as even at 12, he is simply a lot of (usually) enthusiastic help at home.

Resist the temptation to get every animal your family ever dreamed of having, at least until you get facilities to keep them right. We've seen dozens of chickens, goats, dogs, and horses on new homesteads, with absolutely no facilities, housed in hay and board shelters which leaked and were freezing cold, tied to trees, or simply let run. You can't enjoy homestead animals like this and will get little use from them. Better to build a small chicken coop, then get a few chickens,

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Beginning the garden while living in your shack: One of my absolutely first priorities while moving onto a new homestead is to get the garden going. I don't care what time of year it is, there is always something you can do to improve the harvest of your future garden. Only in the deepest part of winter are you slowed down, and then you can build portable fence panels to keep the critters out of your garden in the future.

Even if you move onto the land during late summer or fall, there is plenty of time to plot out the gardens and clear them of stumps, branches, rocks and weeds. Then get that soil tilled up so that you can begin working in organic material to make the soil more workable and fertile.

This first working of the new garden lets you get a good feel for the soil. Is it black and deep? Or solid clay? Of course, we'd all rather have the former, but I've turned red clay, eight feet deep into fertile, fluffy black loam in a few years, simply by working in tons of organic material, such as leaves, livestock bedding and manure, green manure (which is a crop, such as rye, grown and turned under to enrich the soil), compost, and even grain elevator wastes, such as chaff and moldy grain.

I try to till the new garden plot at least three times before my spring planting, each time removing any debris and adding good organic amendments to the soil.

It's best to have at least two gardens, one for annual vegetables such

as tomatoes, corn and potatoes, and another for perennial plants such as berries, rhubarb, asparagus, and horseradish.

On site storage: When planning on moving to raw land, living in a shack, it's best to get rid of as many "extras" as you can. When we first moved to Montana, we had a huge sale and sold all our furniture and much of our "stuff," keeping mainly our pantry, home-canned food, clothes, and tools. We crammed all we owned into a pickup truck and 16-foot stock trailer. A friend hauled our livestock for us separately. We've used that closed in trailer for storage while we set up camp—and longer. With careful packing, we could find much of what we needed, using the side and rear doors for access.

Our new camp set-up will have storage in a pantry and above in the loft. We will also use our wall tent which we salvaged from the dump as a tool storage building. A wall tent is a heavy canvas tent meant to take inclement mountain weather including heavy snow. We used one for two years and it performed very well. It is extremely unwise to pay for storage buildings just to house stuff that is not possible to store on the building site, especially for things that will not be valuable on the new homestead.

With a lot of future planning, the move to the new raw land will not only be successful, but a grand adventure and plenty of fun, too. And I love to tell people we'll once again be living in a shack. It sure gets a conversation started. Δ

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home canning equals fast, easy, tasty meals

By Jackie Clay

Even if canning wasn't easy (which it is), I still would spend the effort, simply because it gives me easy, home-cooked meals in minutes. In modern times with so many folks using "instant" and microwave this and that, no wonder why the vast populace is always dieting. I've tasted that instant "wonder food!" Yuck. Tough, stringy, grizzle, in place of

tender, lean meat, chicken lips and mystery meat in soups, woody or soggy, tasteless vegetables in every dish, potatoes that taste like wallpaper paste.

If I fed my family that, Bob would cook. Not a pretty picture.

Now I often don't have time to spend lots of time fixing meals, as I get out there and saw wood, fence, till the garden and do other time consuming things with Bob and David. But,

through home canning, I'm able to sneak away for a few minutes, then call the boys in for a meal that actually tastes like real food, because it is.

Barbecued beef on a bun

Dump a pint of beef (venison, moose, or elk) in a heavy sauce pan. With a fork, shred the meat, removing any fat or grizzle. There will be enough natural juice to begin simmering the meat on low. Add to this 1



Tomatoes—the base for lots and lots of quick yummy eating



A pantry full of home-canned food equals hundreds of quick, easy tasty meals.

Tbsp. dehydrated onion and ½ pint of home-canned or other barbecue sauce. Simmer on low until well heated and meat absorbs much of the sauce. Serve on warm buns.

Nachos with corn, bean, and tomato salsa

Dump out half a large bag of corn chips on a cookie tin or fry your own quartered corn tortillas until crisp. Shred ½ pound of your favorite cheese over, place in oven at 300° until cheese is melted and bubbly. We like sliced olives on the chips, along with the cheese.

Mix ½ pint canned, drained black beans, ½ pint canned, drained sweet corn, 1 fresh jalapeño, 1 Tbsp. oil, 1 Tbsp. lemon juice, ½ pint fresh or canned, drained tomato, 1 small chopped onion, and 1 tsp. chopped cilantro.

The salsa is best if the canned vegetables have been refrigerated, then is mixed and used fresh. If your family likes hotter salsa, you can vary the pepper content to taste.

Alphabet chicken soup

Pour out 1 quart of home-canned chicken with broth (small boneless

pieces, mostly broth) into large saucepan. Begin simmering. Add 1 shredded carrot, 1 small chopped onion, ¼ tsp. dried, powdered sage, ¼ tsp. black pepper, enough salt to taste



Organized, neat shelves help to make healthy meals.

and 3 oz. (more or less) of alphabet macaroni. Simmer until tender, covered. Cool a bit and watch the smiles.

It's fun to serve this with a cottage cheese salad that's simply a leaf of lettuce with a large spoonful of cottage cheese and half a peach, hollow down. It looks like a big egg, and the kids love it; chicken soup and an egg!

Creamed new potatoes and garden peas

Gently fry crisp four strips of lean bacon. Remove bacon & add to grease 1 Tbsp. butter. Over low heat, stir in 2 Tbsp. flour until well blended. Add 1 cup milk slowly while stirring. As it thickens, add 1 pt. small new potatoes canned with skins on. (You can simply pinch each potato and the skin will slip off!) Do not add water in which potatoes were canned in.

Add ½ cup fresh, frozen, or reconstituted garden peas. Do NOT use canned peas....the taste is NOT the same. While warming, add more milk, as needed to make a medium cream sauce, blending well, but not breaking potatoes.

Crumble the bacon and add it to the mixture along with salt and pepper to taste. I like to add ½ tsp. dehydrated lemon.

Note: I can every small potato at harvest time, from quarter size on up to nearly golf ball size for such use. Most folks just leave 'em in the garden or feed them to the hogs. We really love this mid winter "fresh garden" treat!

Apple pancakes

Make your favorite plain pancake recipe, then add ½ pt. of chopped, canned apples and ½ tsp. cinnamon. Use a little extra grease and fry, rather than bake them. They'll be a little crispy at the edges. You can sprinkle them with powdered sugar if you wish. I like to serve them hot with a swirl of whipped cream on top.

You won't have many left on the plate, GUARANTEED!

You'll be quick to notice that none of my recipes are "fancy" or take long to make. With home canning, cooked ingredients are always at hand, and the quality is excellent. You know that because you can it yourself. There's seldom any "nasty" stuff to sort through, as you only can the best for your family....not like big commercial canning plants that shovel "whatever" into hoppers, to be deposited eventually into sterile-looking cans to line grocery store shelves.

My home-canned foods are made up of the cleanest, chemical free ingredients humanly possible. This allows anyone who eats at my table to relax and enjoy the meals, knowing that they are not ingesting any "weird" stuff.

Home-canning tips for easy, quick meals

Put up many pint and half pint jars, no matter what your family size is. This allows you to use smaller amounts of each food in a recipe. This leaves no "leftovers" to refrigerate (a bonus to those of us with small...or no propane refrigerators), minimizing the chance of waste.

Put up pints and quarts of mixed vegetables. This is convenient for use in soups, stews and casseroles. The combinations can vary with those you most frequently use.

Can many quarts of broth and soup stock. With these you can add vegetables, meat, noodles or pasta, as needed, for instant homemade soups.

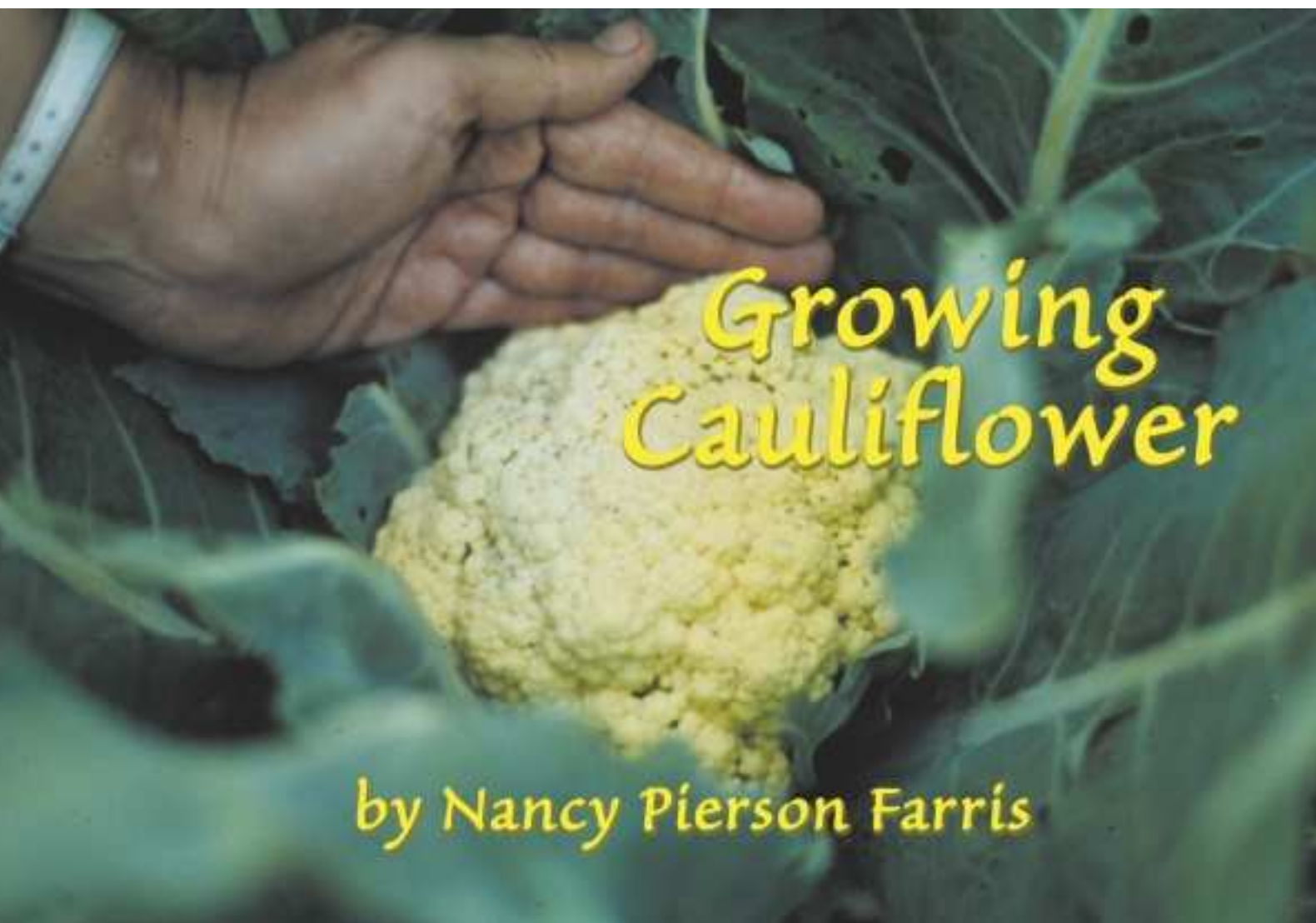
Remember, when canning multiple ingredient jars to always process the jars the longest time any one ingredient requires. This is usually meat or meat broth.

While you must heat to boiling all home-canned vegetables and meat, never boil away endlessly. If you do, you'll end up with vegetables that taste little better than store-bought food. A slow, gentle simmer for fif-

teen minutes is what you want. This is recommended to kill any possible pathogens surviving in the jar. (But, for the life of me, I can't figure out why they aren't lurking in store-bought cans, as well.....)

Meat which is raw packed in jars tends to be a little dry and stringy when used. You can offset this by simmering it for over an hour at very low temperatures in broth, then slicing large chunks of beef/venison/elk across the grain at serving.

The more you use home-canned foods in everyday cooking, the more inventive and creative you'll become in canning and then using foods. I've been canning for over forty years and every week I think up or learn something that makes my life easier and my meals quicker and better. And that gives us more time to enjoy the lifestyle on our backwoods home. Δ



Whether you like to eat it raw with dip, or in a salad, steamed with a taste of butter, or smothered in cheese sauce, cauliflower is a low-cal, low-carbohydrate source of fiber, calcium, and Vitamins A and C. You can grow it in spring or in fall, if you provide for its specific needs.

Cauliflower goes through three stages of growth: plant development, curd formation, and leaf growth. Since the curd is the part usually eaten, it makes sense to provide optimal conditions for curd development.

The best curd forms during cool weather, but too much cold causes the plant to form buttons rather than large, succulent heads. High temperatures cause curds to form rapidly, but they are small and bitter. The window

of opportunity for cauliflower is a small one, especially in my area of South Carolina, where weather can turn brutally hot as early as mid-May.

I start my own plants. Most seed companies sell packets of about 75 seeds. Since I don't want that much cauliflower all at once, I plant what I need, and store the leftover seed in a glass jar in a bottom shelf, where they stay cool and dry. They will remain viable for up to four years.

Another reason to start my own: I can spread out the harvest by using a few plants each of two or more varieties. *Silver Cup* matures in 40 days, *Milkyway* is ready in 45 days, *First White* needs 50 days and tolerates cold, *Amazing* needs 75 days.

If I want a touch of color, I can grow *Cauli-Broc* which produces pale green heads in 60 days, or *Shannon*

which produces pale green florets in 70 days.

Most companies offer at least one self-blanching variety. *Self-Blanching Snowball* matures in 70 days and *Avalanche* matures in 75 days.

I sow the seed in late January in my cool greenhouse. I keep the temperature above freezing at night, cool (about 50°) in the day, and provide seedlings with plenty of light.

When plants have at least one set of second leaves, I transplant them into 4" pots. I will hold plants in the greenhouse for about 6 weeks.

On cloudy days in February, I use cool white fluorescent tubes to provide at least 8 hours of light. Without adequate light, plants grow spindly and weak.

I feed the plants weekly with fish emulsion (5-1-1). The high nitrogen



I plant cauliflower seedlings into 4" pots so the roots can become well developed.

gives me sturdy plants with dark green leaves and well-developed roots.

In early March, three weeks before my last frost date, I prepare hills 20" apart. Cauliflower prefers a soil Ph of about 6.0 to 6.5. If soil is too acid, plants may develop clubroot.

I place a trowelful of compost in each hill to warm the ground under the plant. I don't use fresh manure or kitchen scraps because this could encourage black rot. I could use a tablespoonful of 5-10-10 fertilizer, as recommended by the USDA for cole crops. At this point, a high nitrogen formula would encourage plant growth rather than curd formation.

After plants are set into the garden, the main needs are lots of water—those big leaves transpire a lot—and protection from cabbage worms. Those cute little yellow or white butterflies flitting around the plants will lay eggs on leaves of any cabbage-related vegetables.

In early morning, I check the plants for egg clusters. These are located under the leaves and look like bunch-

es of tiny yellow grapes. If I find any, I crush them. They'd hatch into hungry green cabbage worms. If I find a worm, I am merciless—I pull it off the plant and step on it.

We also use *Bacillus thurengiensis*. This biological control is not toxic, but causes any kind of caterpillar to develop fatal indigestion. My husband prefers the dust (*Dipel*), but I'd rather use liquid *Thuricide* in a spray bottle. We apply this once a week.

During the spring, my husband uses a rotary tiller to keep the aisles between rows weed free. I prefer to pull weeds by hand and use a hoe to keep soil loose around plants.

Depending on the variety you plant, you should see tiny heads forming in the leaf rosette within ten days after you set out the plants. If you are growing a variety that is not self-blanching, the heads may turn a dirty white color as they mature. To prevent this, pull 3 or 4 leaves together at the top and tie loosely with soft twine or a strip of fabric.

You can harvest cauliflower at any stage—if you're anxious to enjoy the fruits of your labor, go ahead and cut a small head. Bear in mind that cauliflower does not produce any side shoots. You get one head per plant and that's the crop.

Here's a recipe that we like using with raw cauliflower:

Curds and carrots

½ cup cauliflower, broken into florets
½ cup shredded carrot
¼ cup grated cheddar cheese
¼ cup thinly sliced celery
Moisten with your favorite salad dressing. Add a handful of chopped parsley or dillweed if you wish.

As weather warms, check the cauliflowers daily. When the curd begins to "rice" (it will appear loose on top) cut it. If you leave it, it won't get bigger, only separate and become tough and perhaps acquire a bitter flavor.

In the kitchen, look over the head carefully, because sometimes a tiny green worm will get down into the curd. You can stand the curds on their heads in a shallow pan of lukewarm water with salt dissolved in it—about ½ tsp. of salt per pint of water. Leave the cauliflower for about 20 minutes. Resident worms will "scrunch up" making them easier to see—and some will give up their hold and float out into the water.



I use a hoe to remove weeds and loosen soil around the plants.

Cauliflower will retain good quality if stored in the vegetable drawer of your refrigerator for 3 or 4 weeks.

If you wish to freeze cauliflower, blanch it for 3 minutes in a small amount of boiling water, or steam 4 minutes. I use just enough water to prevent scorching. When the water boils, I stir so all pieces are moistened, then turn to low heat. After 4 minutes, I dump it into a shallow bowl, and set a plastic bagful of ice on top. After the food cools, I pack it into freezer containers. Never add salt to food you plan to freeze.

Some growers recommend cauliflower as a fall crop. Since plants grow well in warm weather, curds develop in cool weather, and light frost may improve the flavor, cauliflower may produce a better harvest in fall.

Seeds can be sown directly into the garden, about 3 months before the first expected frost date. Either space seeds about 20" apart, or thin seedlings when they have second

Seed sources for cauliflower varieties mentioned in this article:

W. Atlee Burpee & Co.

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Gurney Seed & Nursery Co.

110 Capital St.

Yankton, SD 57079

Harris Seeds

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leaves. You can transplant thinned-out seedlings to an adjacent row.

I start my fall crop in flats on a screened porch, protected from insects and hot summer sun. I set the plants into a row where a summer crop, such as tomato plants, are finishing their job for the year. The mature plants shade the young cauliflower and I think the smell of tomato plants may help confuse the cabbage butterflies.

We have charts showing expected frost dates, but the reality is uncertain. Though cauliflowers will tolerate a light frost, a hard freeze will damage the plant cells and any curds that form will be small and tough. So when the weather forecaster says, "Hard freeze tonight," cut your curds.

We can't always beat the weather. In spring of 2001, I kept my cauliflower plants in the greenhouse til

late March, waiting for weather to settle. I thought I had out-guessed Mama Nature. Wrong! We got a record cold night in early April. Even though my transplants had been well-developed, and I tried to protect them from that late freeze, the heads were not good quality. I did get a head from each plant, but the largest was about 3" across—maybe half the size I usually expect from cauliflowers. However, I figured that my fall crop would be better—and there's always next year! Δ

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My garden

A springboard of food, pleasure, and history

By Habeeb Salloum

“**Y**ou mean that from this postage-size garden you grow enough vegetables and herbs to last you all year?” my friend asked in disbelief as he watched me plant my tomato plants in early May. “Not all, but many of the vegetables that we eat year-round, I grow in this garden. However, my garden is also for me a work of pleasure and a reminder of my family’s history.” I grinned as I went about my task.

I was not surprised that my friend was amazed that on this small 25 by 12 feet plot of land, I could grow a good part of our family’s vegetable larder. I even feel astonished myself when, at the time I am planting my tomatoes in spring, our family is still eating frozen tomatoes from the previous year’s harvest. Yet, there is no magic in my garden’s abilities. My success in growing a fine garden year after year goes back to my family’s history.

My parents emigrated from Syria in the 1920s and by the early 1930s were farming on the arid western Canadian prairies. For over a half dozen years, almost nothing grew, but we survived well, mostly from the produce of our yearly garden. Unlike some of our neighbors who barely could subsist and moved away one after the other, our hand-watered garden made sure that we were never hungry.

In Syria, my parents were peasants and had inherited from their ancestors the art of survival in an arid land. When our neighbors’ fields were bare, we grew chickpeas and lentils



Leek pies

which needed little moisture. Hence, they were perfect for the dry prairie climate.

Some of the chickpeas, we ate as a delicacy—green or roasted green.

However, almost all the chickpea and lentil crops, we reaped ripe and they formed the main basis for our meals. For herbs and tasty greens, in spring my mother would scour the country-



Radishes, tomatoes, and basil



Tomato and coriander salad

side around our garden. Those she did not use fresh, she dried for the winter months.

Our vegetable garden, which we hand-watered from a well, produced enough vegetables and herbs to last us a whole year. All summer we ate the produce fresh and for future use, we canned, dried, or pickled a portion. Others we preserved in our earth cellar—beets, carrots, potatoes, and turnips, covered with soil. With the few bushels of wheat, which even in the driest years we harvested and made into burghal (wheat that is cooked, then dried and ground) and a few chickens, our family ate well the whole year. We barely had any clothes and virtually no luxuries, but our garden produced gourmet meals.

During these Depression years, the taste for green chickpeas and the great dishes my mother prepared from our garden produce never left me. Today, even though I live in the middle of Toronto, the largest city in Canada, year after year I still plant a micro replica of our Depression years' gardens, growing some of the same produce I relished in my youth.

Every year in early spring, I prepare the soil, except a portion reserved for a half dozen perennial leek and onion

plants and two tiny patches of mint and sweet oregano, by adding cattle or sheep manure. Around the first of May, I plant from seed, beets, kohlrabi, turnips, a few cabbage plants, a small patch of chickpeas and a few climbing bean plants at the bottom of an edging tree. A week or so later, I plant one or two eggplant, a few hot pepper and a dozen tomato plants—six ripening early and six later in the year.

In between the tomatoes, I plant a few radish seeds and a number of herbs like basil, caraway, dill, parsley, thyme, and every year without fail, coriander—my favorite herb. A week later I complete the planting with usually three cucumber and three zucchini plants, hugging the edge of the garden. In order to give them room as they grow, I train them to flow away from the garden.

If the weather is fine, the garden quickly begins to flourish, but if there is a cold spell and the temperature dips below zero, I replant the frozen plants and this tends to retard the progress of my garden. In the main after the first planting, the garden takes off.

Beginning in May, we are making leek pies and in early June herb salads from fresh coriander, onions, mint, radish, and sweet oregano. Thereafter, as the herbs grow, I harvest them and what we do not eat, I dry or freeze for winter use. In the ensuing days, the dishes we cook from our garden produce are never ending. Soon the quick-growing herbs and the cooked green tops of the beets, kohlrabi, radishes, and turnips are gracing our table. Not long after we add fresh tender cucum-



Herb salad

ber, cooked green beans, and zucchini dishes.

All summer long I pick tender cucumbers, green beans, and the zucchini when they are about six inches long—mostly to be stuffed. However, the garden produces more zucchini than we can use. The extra ones we hollow, then freeze for future use. The scraped-out inner hearts are not wasted, we utilize them in omelets, soups, and stews.

What I always look forward to are the ripe tomatoes about mid-July. They not only beautify the garden but are delicious. Tomato salads in endless varieties, especially with herbs like fresh basil, coriander, and caraway, are now on the daily menu. Always there are more ripe tomatoes than we can use. The extra ones we wash, then place in plastic bags and freeze.

At the same time when the tomatoes begin to ripen, every day I relish a few of the green chickpeas and a few pieces of raw kohlrabi. Usually, by the time autumn rolls around, the chickpeas are finished, but if there are any remaining chickpea pods, I roast them in the oven—for me a heavenly treat.

In August, we pickle the remaining small cucumbers with dill from our garden into dill pickles; and the large ones become bread and butter pickles. This time also, I pick the remaining hot peppers and dry them—our yearly supply. From mid-August to frost time, beet and turnip dishes are frequent. By the time the cold grips the land, I pick the eggplants and make them into one or two jars of garlic-eggplant pickles for the winter months. I then harvest the cabbage and in the ensuing days our family enjoys a number of cabbage roll meals. Shortly thereafter, I pick the remaining beets, kohlrabi, and turnips to complete our yearly supply of pickles.

Pickles made from these vegetables are only prepared in the Middle East,

but in my view they outdo pickled cucumbers. The beets, kohlrabi, and turnips are peeled and sliced, then the kohlrabi and turnips are placed in jars. Along with the pickling solution, a slice of beets is placed in each jar. In a few weeks bright red pickled vegetables will always beautify the surrounding dishes being served.

In autumn, when I hear the first rumor of frost, I pick the remaining green tomatoes and wrap them with paper, then place them in a cool place in the basement. As they ripen, we either freeze or eat them. At times we are eating fresh tomatoes from our garden until December.

Almost every year, my garden produces enough of the herbs and vegetables which I plant to last us the whole year—fresh in summer, and dried, pickled, or frozen the remaining months of the year. Yet, this is not all my gardens' attributes. Even though it produces much of our family's vegetable needs, it is also to me a springboard of pleasure and enshrines the history of my family.

Recipes from my garden

Tomato and Coriander Salad *Salatat Banadura Wa Kuzbara*

Serves about 6

5 medium sized tomatoes, quartered, then thinly sliced
¾ cup chopped fresh coriander leaves
1 tsp. salt
½ tsp. pepper
⅛ tsp. cayenne
3 Tbsp. lemon juice
3 Tbsp. olive oil

Place tomatoes and coriander leaves in a salad bowl, then gently toss and set aside.

In a small bowl, thoroughly mix remaining ingredients. Pour over tomatoes and coriander, then toss just before serving.

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Herb Salad—*Salatat Tawabil*

Serves about 8

1 small bunch dandelion, thoroughly washed and chopped
1 cup finely chopped stemmed parsley
1 cup finely chopped fresh coriander leaves
2 medium tomatoes, diced into ½-inch cubes
1 large clove garlic, crushed
4 Tbsp. olive oil
4 Tbsp. lemon juice
1 tsp. salt
½ tsp. pepper
¼ tsp. cumin
about 10 pitted black olives, sliced in half

Combine dandelion, parsley, coriander leaves, and tomatoes in a salad bowl, then set aside.

In a small bowl, thoroughly mix remaining ingredients, except olives, then pour over salad bowl contents. Toss, then decorate with olives and serve.

Leek pies

Leeks, which are not used much in cooking in North America, make an excellent-succulent pie.

1½ pounds frozen dough
4 heaping cups of thoroughly washed, chopped leeks
4 medium onions, chopped
4 cloves garlic, crushed
1 small hot pepper, very finely chopped
2 Tbsp. sumach (purchased in Middle Eastern food markets)
2 Tbsp. finely chopped fresh coriander leaves
¼ cup olive oil
¼ cup lemon juice
1 tsp. salt
½ tsp. pepper

Allow the dough to thaw, then set aside.

Make a filling by thoroughly combining all remaining ingredients, then set aside.

Form dough into 20 balls, then place them on a flowered tray. Cover with a damp cloth, then allow to stand in a warm place for 30 minutes.

Roll balls into 5 to 6 inch rounds, then place 2 heaping tablespoons of filling on each round, stirring the filling each time. (Preferably the filling should be divided into 20 equal parts.) Fold dough over the filling, then close by firmly pinching edges together into half moon or triangle shape.

Place pies on well-greased baking trays, then bake in a 350°F preheated oven for 20 minutes or until pies turn golden brown. Remove from the oven, then brush with olive oil. Serve hot or cold.



Fried Zucchini with Pomegranate

Serves from 4 to 6

- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 medium sized zucchini (about 8 inches long and 3 inches diameter), cut into half then sliced into ½-inch thickness
- 1 Tbsp. pomegranate concentrate, diluted in 2 tablespoons water
- 2 Tbsp. very finely chopped fresh coriander leaves
- ½ tsp. garlic powder
- ½ tsp. pepper
- ½ tsp. paprika
- ⅛ tsp. cayenne

Fried zucchini with pomegranate

Heat oil in a frying pan, then fry zucchini slices until they turn golden brown, adding more oil if necessary. Remove and place on a flat serving platter.

Prepare a sauce by combining remaining ingredients, then spoon sauce over zucchini slices. Allow to stand for an hour before serving.

Rinse out a teapot with hot water, then add tea. Pour in ½ cup boiling water, then, to remove bitterness, swish around in the pot quickly. Discard the water, but make sure not to throw away tea. Add mint, sugar and remainder of boiling water, then allow to steep for 3 minutes. Stir and taste, adding more sugar if necessary before serving. Note: For second helpings, leave mint and tea in pot; then add a teaspoon of tea, several mint leaves, and some sugar. Add again the same amount of boiling water. When mint rises to surface, the tea is ready. Stir and taste for sugar, then serve.

Moroccan Mint Tea

Serves 4

The preparation of this tea, called *atay* by the Moroccans, is Morocco's most popular drink. It is consumed at all times of the day by people from every stratum of society. Whether served in a humble café, an elaborate restaurant, or in the home, this drink is the refreshment most loved by the Moroccans and the other peoples of North Africa.

- 4½ cups boiling water
- 3 tsp. green tea (if not available, Indian tea may be substituted)
- ½ cup of pressed fresh mint leaves with stalks (2 teaspoons finely crushed dried mint leaves can be used if fresh mint is not available.)
- 3 tsp. sugar



Moroccan mint tea

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Eggplant Salad

Serves about 8

Very tasty, this dish native to Palestine can be served as an appetizer or as a salad.

1 large eggplant
about 2 lbs. oil for frying
4 cloves garlic, crushed
1 small hot pepper, very finely chopped
4 Tbsp. lemon juice
2 Tbsp. olive oil
1 tsp. salt
½ tsp. pepper
1 small piece of tomato
sprigs of parsley

Peel, then dice eggplant into about ¾-inch cubes. Place in a strainer in a sink, then place heavy weight over top of eggplant cubes. Allow to stand for an hour in order to drain.

Heat oil in a frying pan to about an inch deep, then fry eggplant cubes until they begin to brown. Remove with slotted spoon, then drain on paper towels.

In the meantime, combine remaining ingredients, except tomato and parsley, then set aside.

Place eggplant cubes on a serving platter, then decorate with the tomato and parsley and serve. Δ

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a pleasant surprise: the asparagus bean

*By Alice Brantley Yeager
Photos by James O. Yeager*

The year 2000 was not what one would call a great gardening year at Yeager Acres. We had hardly recovered from the spring rains when summer hit with high humidity and temperatures that soared until we thought Nature's thermometer had stuck. Drought settled in all over our area; ponds became mud holes, and trees began to shed their leaves long before fall. Add hordes of blood thirsty mosquitoes to these conditions and you don't have a pretty picture. TV weather forecasters became more apologetic with each passing day and there was talk of hunting up those folks who claim they can seed the clouds and produce rain. You might say our summer was an endurance test.

Near the end of July when we ordinarily plant fall beans, greens, etc., most of the vegetables in gardens hereabouts had succumbed to the ravages of our unpleasant summer. We gardeners who were bold enough to plant fall crops in spite of the weather did so with a mixture of fear and hope, our reasoning being that unfavorable weather does not remain the same forever.

I had on hand some asparagus bean seeds which I had meant to plant in the spring, but I ran out of space, so had put the seeds aside until "later." Early one morning before the day's searing heat began, I removed some spent cucumber vines from one of our



Asparagus bean, also known as Yard Long bean, is a good yielder and thrives in hot weather.



The first picking of asparagus beans gave us a nice sampling of a vegetable new to us. The delicious flavor is more like black-eyed peas than any beans we have tasted.

raised beds and put in the asparagus beans. Support racks were already in place and mulched ground was easy to work, so I finished before the sun had a chance to make life miserable. A good soaking with the water hose completed the project.

The seedlings began to pop up in only three days. Within about ten days most of the plants were ready to reach up and climb. Once the runners came in contact with the racks, there was a race to the top. I have always thought one of the joys of raising any pole bean is to visit the young vines each morning and see how much they have grown overnight. The asparagus beans were exceptionally fast climbers.

We were anxious to see the first beans. About the time the vines had reached the tops of the six foot racks, tiny flower buds appeared and they opened into small, creamy-pink, pea-like flowers. Then came the very

slender beans that grew longer and longer. We found that the beans were at their best quality for snapping when they were about a foot long. Beyond that the pods toughened and the beans reached more of a shelling stage. However we shelled the larger beans and cooked them right along with the snapped pods.

I'm not quite sure why the asparagus bean is called a bean. The flowers and beans both more closely resemble those of a black-eyed pea plant than they do a regular bean such as *Kentucky Wonder* or *Romano*. The flavor is definitely enhanced black-eyed pea and delicious. Maybe something suffered in translation as the asparagus bean is not native to this country, but apparently hails from the Orient.

Like pole beans, the asparagus bean likes a sunny spot in the garden but will tolerate some afternoon shade. Tall supports are a must. We use a

variety of supports for climbing plants—racks made from reinforcing wire, hog wire strung between posts, etc. We have access to plenty of bamboo, so it's easy to make A-frame or tepee towers from bamboo. When you make your supports, keep in mind that you want supports that will make harvesting easy. Don't erect something that you will have to maneuver through to reach the beans. Also, don't have rows so close together that vines weave back and forth and become a trap for dead leaves. Allow adequate space between rows so air may circulate freely and plants may receive plenty of sunshine.

Soil should be well cultivated—no clods or weeds. If you have raised beds covered with mulch, as we do, so much the better. We don't need our old garden tiller anymore. We just use a garden fork or spade now and then. We make a shallow trench-row and

plant seeds about 5 inches apart. If planted closer together, plants will have to be thinned when they come up and who wants to throw away healthy seedlings? It's a good idea to put your support down when you finish planting to avoid damaging roots later.

When seedlings have several leaves and are about 4-5 inches high, it is wise to lay down a good organic mulch of grass clippings, straw, pine needles, etc. This will protect the young plants from losing dirt around their roots during heavy rains, cut down on weeding and help retain moisture in the soil. As a fringe benefit over the long term, the breakdown of the mulch will add nutrients to the soil and make it easier to cultivate.

If your garden soil is already loamy, well-drained and easy to work, chances are it's okay for most vegetables—squash, cucumbers, beans, etc. However if you have had trouble with some plants getting off to a poor start and you suspect the soil could be the problem, a soil test might be in order. Your county extension agent should be in a position to give you some good advice and also run the soil test. This is usually free-of-charge—a taxpayer's perk.

The development of asparagus beans is fun to watch as each day the pods lengthen. I am sure under ideal climatic conditions they would reach their yard-long potential, but, 2000 not being a banner year, the longest bean we harvested was about 22 inches. As said above, however, the best quality stage is a foot or less.

We found the asparagus bean to be relatively pest-free. There were a few ants that seemed to be drawn to the vines, but we knocked those off with a stream of water from the hose. We lost no small plants to cutworm as cutworms are non-existent in our garden. I believe we wiped them out years ago by putting a tiny bit of 10% Sevin Dust at the base of plants that often fell prey to cutworms. However

I don't urge the use of much Sevin Dust, as it also destroys the good along with the unwanted.

It's strange how some vegetables grown as oddities can be quite delicious despite negative statements by seed companies. Makes you wonder if they have ever actually tried them. One company says asparagus beans produce an astonishing crop but the beans are slightly stringy. Another states the beans are grown more as a curiosity and that the plants produce more vines than food. Well, our asparagus beans endured the heat, out-produced the struggling regular pole beans and earned themselves a future in our garden.

With a botanical name like *Vigna sesquipedalis*, the asparagus bean has to be good!

Hoppin' John with fresh asparagus beans

1 cup uncooked rice (not instant)
1 pound pork sausage broken into small pieces
3½ cups water
1 pound asparagus beans, rinsed and snapped.
1 medium onion, chopped
1 green bell pepper, chopped
⅛ tsp. cayenne pepper
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. dried sweet basil

Cook rice according to directions on package. (Directions will vary with different types of rice.)

While rice is cooking, saute sausage to a light brown in a large iron skillet. Drain off most of grease, but leave a bit for flavor. Add the rest of the ingredients and simmer, covered, for 30-40 minutes or until asparagus beans are tender.

Combine sausage mixture with cooked rice and serve hot. A dash of Tabasco (hot) sauce is in order for those who enjoy the Cajun touch.

Served with a salad and drink, this recipe should serve 4-5 people.

TIP: Want something different in a stir-fry mixture? Try putting in a few snapped, fresh asparagus beans!

Cooked fresh asparagus beans

1 pound asparagus beans, rinsed and snapped. (If some have grown beyond the tender snapping stage, shell the beans and discard the pods.)
2 slices cured bacon, fried and cut in small pieces. Reserve bacon drippings.
1 small onion, chopped
¼ tsp. salt
1/8 tsp. freshly ground black pepper

Put beans in 2 quart pot and cover with water. Bring to a boil and reduce heat to simmer. Add other ingredients, including one tablespoon of bacon drippings, and cook about 25-30 minutes or until beans are tender. Avoid overcooking as beans could become mushy.

Serve as a side dish with other food or serve as a main dish with your favorite bread or cornbread, a salad, and hot tea or coffee.

Freezing asparagus beans

We have found that asparagus beans freeze quite well. Simply wash and drain the beans thoroughly in a colander and snap them into desired lengths. Any that have gone beyond the snapping stage may be shelled and pods discarded.

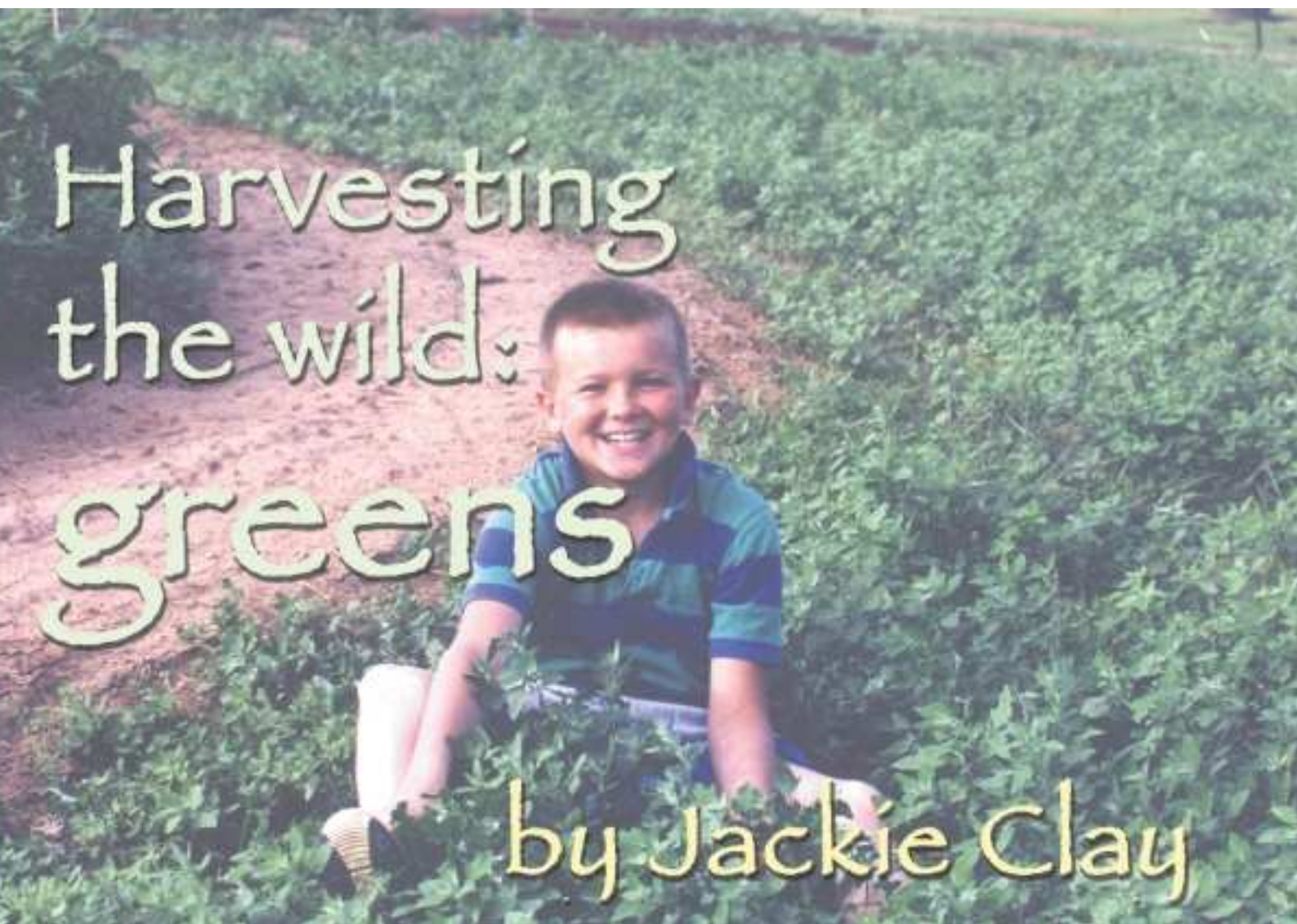
Put snapped beans and any shelled beans on a cookie sheet and place in freezer. When frozen, put beans into freezer bags, label and date, and store in freezer for future use.

Seed Sources:

The Cook's Garden, P.O. Box 535, Londonderry, VT 05148

Gurney's, 110 Capital Street, Yankton, SD 57079

Pinetree Garden Seeds, Box 300, Gloucester, ME 04260 Δ



Winter's dreary end seems to drag on and on into early spring. We itch to get planting the garden, poring over seed catalogs and babying those tiny light green tomato, pepper, and other infant plants in the south windows. How lucky we are that the very first delectable greens that our bodies crave are already growing in sunny, protected areas around the homestead, planted for us by God, himself.

More than a few mothers have taken a basket and paring knife, desperately scrounging around the south sides of buildings, trying to find enough tender, nourishing greens to feed their family during hard times. This was especially common during pioneer years and during the lean Great Depression. Such common "weeds" as dandelion, purslane, pig

weed, and lambs quarter are very nourishing. And they are extremely tasty, to boot.

Each year, our family forages for and harvests many local wild greens to enjoy with simple meals. And we like them so much that I can and dry several varieties to use year-around. One benefit of eating "weeds" is that they grow exceedingly well, as we all know from weeding the lawn and garden. While we struggle to get that row of spinach to grow during warm weather, the pigweed and lambs quarters simply shoot up. (Did you know that no one can tell my home-canned spinach from these weeds when canned as well?)

Let's take a look at some of the more common and easily identified wild greens. Of course, as with any wild foraging, we must be sure of the plants we pick as there are some poi-

sonous little buggers out there that we sure don't want to serve for dinner. And take care not to harvest any plants from an area that might have been sprayed with insecticides, chemical fertilizers, or orchard sprays.

Pigweed (wild amaranth)

The coarse, lowly pigweed is one of our most favorite wild greens. Most folks call pigweed a blankety-blank weed. But they've never actually cooked up a mess or they would realize what a jewel they have clogging up the garden rows. When we first looked on our New Mexico homestead, walking over the abandoned cow yard with shoulder-high pigweed and waist-high lambs quarter among other edible wild plants, I thought to myself, "Well, here we could never starve to death!"



*Pigweed ready to pick.
Pigweed is an amaranth—a better
known edible.*

The most common pigweed is the red rooted pigweed. It is a coarse weed—even when young—vigorous and quick growing. The leaves are oval and come to a point, with distinct ribs and wavy or scalloped edges. The leaves grow in a widely branched rosette, with the new growth tighter and held above the older leaves. The leaf stems are a pale greenish pink, and the root a distinct red. You will seldom find only one pigweed; it is a prolific reseeder. This fact makes it a nasty garden weed, but ensures that it is also an abundant vegetable. (One plant can have over 100,000 seeds.)

This fact is also important, as the seeds are not only edible, but very good. Pigweed is wild amaranth which is an important food to many Native Peoples all across North and South America.

Pigweed is nutritious in all forms, being high in vitamins A and C and high in iron and calcium. There is one caution. In farmland and in some Western American areas, pigweed can store up dangerous amounts of nitrates. This does not mean you should not eat pigweed. Be moderate, varying it with other forms of greens.

We begin to pick pigweed when it is about six inches tall and very tender, continuing the harvest through

summer when the plants shoot up. With larger plants, harvest only the tender leaves and stems, including the growing rosette at the top. Once it begins to flower, we either pull the plant or cut off the top to encourage new growth. The main stem and larger side stems become woody and inedible, as do sunflowers. (The stems of our New Mexican cow yard pigweeds became so large that we literally had to cut it with a chain saw.)

Cooking pigweed is simple. The most common use is to simply rinse the leaves and steam or boil until wilted and tender. A dab of butter and a sprinkle of salt and vinegar and you have real good eating.

You can substitute pigweed greens for any recipe calling for spinach. The raw leaves are a bit rough, so if you use the most tender leaves in salads, you probably will choose to add only a few until you see how your family likes the mixture.

One of our favorite recipes for pigweed is piggy quiche, your basic spinach quiche, only using abundant and tasty pigweed.

Piggy quiche:

1 unbaked flaky pie crust
6 large eggs, separated
¼ cup mushrooms
1 red bell pepper, sliced
½ tsp. salt
pinch rubbed sage
1 tsp. butter
1 cup slightly wilted pigweed
leaves & tender stems
1 small onion, chopped
½ cup grated sharp cheddar
cheese
¼ tsp. Tabasco Sauce
½ tsp. roasted, mashed garlic
(optional)

Rub unbaked pie crust with butter. Whip egg whites until stiff, then fold in the beaten egg yolks. Mix gently. In sauce pan, sauté chopped onion, sliced mushrooms, and green pepper

until barely tender. Mix in slightly steam-wilted pigweed leaves and tender stems. Add seasonings and cheese to egg. Mix gently. Add vegetables. Pour into pie crust. Bake at 375° until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Serve at once. This simple quiche can be put together including making the pie crust in half an hour and tastes like it took all day. (Never tell 'em they're eating weeds.)

The seeds of the pigweed are very good. In fact, amaranth is very well known, especially south of the border, as a grain. There are many varieties of domestic edible amaranth available, bred especially for their tasty seed production. As I've said, an amaranth plant can produce over 100,000 seeds. And all of them are tasty.

To gather the seeds, wait until the plants mature and die in the fall, turning brown and brittle. Then, before the wind sows billions of potential weed seeds right in your garden, gently clip the seed heads off into a paper bag such as an empty feed sack that is clean. Do this on a dry day when the plants are quite dry to avoid mold problems during curing. Fill the sack with seed heads, but do not pack them down, allowing for air circulation. Store the sack in a warm, dry area, protected from birds and rodents. In about a week, the seeds will shatter out quite easily.

I tie the sack shut with stout twine, then simply walk on the bag quite briskly, even stomping gently on it. Turn the bag over and repeat. Shake the bag. You'll begin to hear lots of little seeds rattling happily in the bottom. Repeat again, until you think you've threshed the seeds out pretty well. Then untie the twine and gently pull out one seed head over a newspaper. Examine it, rubbing the hulls between your fingers. I'd recommend wearing gloves as amaranth seed heads are picky. More than one Indian tribe refers to pigweed as "that which picks the fingers."

When the seeds have been mostly threshed free, I pour the sack's contents a little at a time into a screen or basket with smaller holes between weaves, held over a large, clean, dry container such as a canning kettle. Shake the sieve and watch the little seeds trickle through into the kettle.

Throw the spent heads into another paper sack to burn, as there are always some seeds that never thresh out and you sure don't want to add them to your compost pile.

Now you have a kettle with a good layer of tiny seeds mixed with chaff. On a fairly windy day, winnow out the chaff by simply pouring the seeds from one container to another on the ground, with a foot or so between them. The wind will carry the light chaff away, and let the heavier seeds fall to the lower container. **Do not** do this in a heavy wind, as amaranth seeds are small and fairly light and will blow away in a stout wind.

You may now toast the seeds by spreading thinly on a cookie sheet in an oven set at 250° and baking for about 15 minutes, stirring occasionally to prevent scorching. Toasting gives the grain a nutty flavor.

The raw or toasted seeds may now be ground with a mortar and pestle or blender and added to any multi-grain bread. To each five cups of wheat flour, you can add a cup of amaranth flour.



Red-rooted pigweed, or wild amaranth, makes an excellent green and also a wild grain.

Or you can make a traditional "mush" by simmering 1 cup of water with 1 cup of ground amaranth seeds. The toasted seeds work best for this unusual breakfast food. Adding dried fruit improves the flavor to those accustomed to more zesty fare.

Lamb's quarters

Another wild green that is a favorite of ours is lamb's quarters. Also a common garden weed, plentiful in most areas of the country, this wild vegetable is easily gathered in the spring and early summer. In some parts of the country, lamb's quarter is called pigweed, but is not a true pigweed or amaranth, but a chenopodium.

Lamb's quarters has triangular, notched leaves that look sort of like a goose's foot. This is why, in some parts of the country, folks call it "goosefoot."

The veins of the leaves are whitish, and the undersides and tops of new leaves are sparkling with white "fairy dust." We pick lamb's quarters when it is about eight inches to a foot tall. When it gets too large, the stems become woody and tough.

Lamb's quarters leaves are quite good in a salad or just for a snack on cool mornings with dew still clinging to them.

Like pigweed however, don't go overboard eating this green exclusive-

ly, as it can harbor nitrates in heavily farmed and fertilized areas. And lamb's quarter contains oxalic acid, which can be harmful when consumed in bulk over quite a lengthy period.

But when eaten in moderation, as one would any garden vegetable, there is scarcely any better green, domestic or



Common lamb's quarter is easy to spot with its scalloped oval and pointed leaves. Pick when young and tender. In the photo on the first page of this article, the author's son, David, sits in his favorite patch of lamb's quarters.

wild. We use a lot of it, off and on, all year, for I home can pints and pints of lamb's quarter to use during the winter.

Besides being very tasty, the lamb's quarter is extremely nutritious, being high in vitamins A, C, riboflavin, thiamine, and niacin. It's easy to see why this green was a staple of many ancient cultures, from Europe to North and South America.

While we were in New Mexico, many of our Spanish neighbors carried burlap feed sacks into pastures and abandoned homesteads to pick "quillites" or "greens," namely the succulent lamb's quarters. And we were right there with them with our own sacks. Then the next day, the greens were rinsed, boiled in salt water just enough to wilt them, and packed into canning jars and processed to ensure that we had enough lamb's quarters to last until the next spring's crop was abundant.

One of my favorite recipes for lamb's quarters is to fry a slice of

ham, then add a tablespoon of butter to the frying pan when the ham has been removed. Then sprinkle handfuls of fresh, rinsed lamb's quarter into the pan, stir frying until just wilted and tender. Sometimes I add a small chopped onion or mellow mild red chile pepper, which has been seeded. Served hot, along with the fried ham, you have a pretty darned good lunch. (For those of you who do not eat pork, a slice of smoked venison ham works equally well.)

Like pigweed, the seeds of lamb's quarter are also tasty. They are tiny, but we find they thrash out quite easily, just as do those for pigweed seed. You may toast the seeds and/or grind them to make mush or flour. It's fun to add wild seed ground grain to your homemade breads. Try sprinkling toasted lamb's quarter seeds on the tops of buttered, baked rolls and bread as you would poppy or sesame seeds. Pretty darned good.

Dandelion

The dandelion is one weed which needs little introduction. Many of us grew up, digging this tenacious weed out of our folks' lawns and gardens. With its cheery bright yellow flower, we think it's as pretty in our lawn as planted crocus and daffodils. And at the Clay homestead, it is very seldom ever pulled as a weed.

The dandelion is very nutritious, perhaps *the* most nutritious garden vegetable. Pretty darned impressive for a weed. It is very high in vitamins A, B1, B2, B3, C, D and many minerals, such as calcium, zinc, selenium, magnesium, iron, manganese, phosphorous, potassium, and sodium.

Nearly every part of the plant is not only edible, but delectable and different tasting than the others. The flowers, twisted and pinched off the stems are sweet and when steamed just

enough to make them less "fuzzy" to the mouth, they are wonderful drizzled with butter and sprinkled with vinegar and salt.

The leaves are a bit bitter but still very good, both raw and cooked. The steamed or boiled leaves are more

with a dab of butter or chill and add to cold salads.

You can even toast the roots in an oven with the very lowest temperature or only the pilot light on until crisp, but not scorched. Then run through a grinder or your blender. Now you have a coffee substitute which can be brewed just as you would coffee. (I hate coffee and think roasted dandelion root tastes *much* better.) This could come in handy as a survival drink for those of you who just need that morning cup of java. Unfortunately, you won't get a caffeine fix, as dandelion is caffeine free.

One problem for many people is that the dandelion grows so low to the ground that it is often gritty with blown dirt. This makes it hard to rinse clean enough to get the grit out completely. I find that a salad spinner does a great job. Or lacking that tool, rinsing the plant vigorously, under strong running water will do quite a good job.



The edible bracken fern shoot, often called "fiddleneck" for obvious reasons, is gathered early in the spring.

mild than the raw ones, and when more bitter leaves are boiled in two waters they become milder. Never over-boil dandelion or it loses its health benefits.

The crown, or smaller rosette of leaves, and small, unopened buds just at and barely below ground level are like a separate vegetable, being mild and succulent to the taste.

Even the slender, parsnip-like root of the dandelion is good to eat. I scrub the larger roots well with a pot scrubber, then lay them in a shallow baking dish. If the root seems woody or stringy, I scrape or peel it, depending on the root. Then bake the roots in a moderate oven until tender. Serve

Cattail

Nearly everyone is familiar with the cattail, especially its round, cigar-shaped fuzzy seedheads. Besides being fun to whack each other with (as kids we would watch the fuzzy seeds blow about in the wind,) the cattail plant is a storehouse of good eating. From the very top (the yellow pollen), to the mucky bottom (fleshy roots), the cattail provides a wide variety of edibles for the wild forager. And you don't have to get very "wild," either, as the cattail is common in farm ponds, along streams and lowlands nationwide.

Do not pick cattails from polluted bodies of water, or those having high-

nitrate run-off from farm fields. Also be careful about harvesting from heavily traffic areas, due to auto pollutants.

Be sure of the plant you pick, as the wild flag or wild iris, which has a blue-purple flower, is toxic to consume, lives in the same habitat as the cattail and has quite similar leaves. Generally, the cattail leaves are wider and more hollow. The wild flag's leaves are iris-like and flat down to the bottom, where the cattail shoot is rounded right down to the root.

Like many other wild foods, the cattail is extremely nutritious in all forms.

Our first spring foraging trips always include a side trip to a remote mountain marshy creek, where abundant cattails grow. As a child canoeing with my parents, we would pull tender white cattail shoots from the water to eat as a snack on each trip. These taste just like a mild cucumber. Simply grasp the green cattail leaves of young plants and pull upward. The shoot comes up easily, with the lower portion being a very succulent, tender white.

Dipping these in your favorite vegetable dip or simply sprinkling with vinegar dressing as you would a garden cucumber, and you have a wild salad deluxe. I've even made wild pickles by using sliced cattail shoots in place of cucumbers for fresh refrigerator pickles, from dill to bread and butter types.

This same blanched, tender shoot can be steamed for ten minutes and served with butter or a cream sauce and you have a tasty vegetable that tastes kind of like mild parsnips.

Likewise, in the spring for a short period of time, the spike on top of the plant above the more familiar green "hot dog" that later becomes the brown seed head, can be eaten for a delectable treat. This is sometimes called cattail corn on the cob. Like corn on the cob, you prepare it by dropping it in boiling water for about

five minutes. If not tender at this point, simply let it sit in the boiled water for five or ten more minutes until it is. Then dribble butter over the spikes and sprinkle with salt and you have an excellent vegetable.

This male spike quickly goes from green (corn on the cob) to yellow. This yellow powder is the pollen, and once the spike loses its green color, it is no longer good as corn on the cob. But this yellow pollen is quite easily collected and is a flour substitute (use about half domestic flour and half pollen). To collect the pollen, simply stick the pollen spike into a paper sack and shake or beat the head inside to release the pollen.

You will get quite a bit of chaff as well, but this can be sifted out with a common flour sifter or fine screen. Once you have sifted your pollen, it is ready to use as flour. We often make pancakes or cornbread using cattail pollen, especially when out camping. It is a bit slow to absorb water, so you need to make your batter, then let it rest for half an hour, stirring occasionally, until all is evenly moist.

And finally, the root can be dug to eat as a starchy flour substitute. This is a messy job, as you can't simply pull the cattail plant. You need to get down and dirty. We wade barefoot in cattail marshes, digging down around the base of the cattail with bare toes and a pointed digging stick. The toes locate the rhizomes and the digging stick helps pry them out of their mucky bed.

Once cleaned, the rhizomes can be slowly roasted until dry. Then grind the roots between two smooth large stones to release the starchy powder. These roots contain a net of fibers, which can be picked out and the flour sifted. This flour is good to add to stews and soups or to add to your bread or pancakes. As well, they really aren't too bad roasted and eaten with salt and butter, mashed with

your fork or fingers and the good part sucked off the fiber.

Not bad at all, for this common weed of marshy places.

Purslane

Our 12-year-old son David's very favorite wild plant is purslane. This is a very common garden weed and grows nearly everywhere including waste land. This is a portulaca, related to the garden flower and is easily recognized. It is low-growing, forming a large mat. The leaves and stems are succulent and fleshy. They are smooth and reddish in color, with the stems being more highly colored than the greenish oval leaves, which like the garden flower, are broader at the tip than the stem end.

The plant is easy to pull, having roots small for such a hearty plant. We like purslane so much that we scarcely ever pull it from the garden.

And it is very nutritious, more so than most domestic vegetables. It is high in vitamin A, C, E, folic acid, containing fatty acids, sterols, calcium, potassium, iron, and magnesium, to name only a few nutrients.

Besides, it is very tasty. David often just plucks leaves and stems to snack on as he weeds the garden. He calls it "my weed," and rejoices when the young plants dot the garden paths in the late spring.

After it is thoroughly rinsed, I snip up tender stems and leaves, adding it to garden salads. Or you can simply drop large pieces into boiling water for a few minutes and serve with a bit of butter or drizzled with herb vinegar. I also often stir fry it with a little smoked meat. Or dip hand-sized pieces of purslane in deep frying batter and fry until golden brown.

The tiny black seeds can be harvested in the late summer and ground to add to breads. The numerous seeds do take awhile to gather. (One reason hunter-gatherers were seldom overweight.)

Home canning wild greens

These wild greens, with the exception of the cattail, can be easily home-canned, allowing us to enjoy them year-round. In fact, I generally can more wild greens than domestic greens. Not only do the wild cousins out-produce their domestic brothers—which can be finicky to grow some years—but they just plain taste better.

Wild greens **must be canned under pressure**, as they are low-acid vegetables. It is not safe to can them in a water bath canner, as they require a higher temperature to kill possible harmful bacteria. But this is easy to do using a pressure canner.

Simply harvest and rinse your wild greens well to get rid of all grit and dirt. Pick through them, discarding any insect-chewed leaves or dry leaves. Then dip them into a large pot of boiling water for just long enough to wilt them. A large amount of greens will wilt down to an appreciably smaller amount.

Dip the greens out of the pot and fill clean canning jars to within one inch of the top. Then dip up the boiling water, in which they were cooked, filling the jar to within an inch of the top with the water. Add one teaspoon of salt to quarts or one half teaspoon to pints, if desired.

Wipe the rim of the jar clean and place a hot, previously boiled new lid on the jar and screw down a ring, firmly tight. Place in warm canner. Process the jars (all types of greens) at 10 pounds pressure for 90 minutes (quarts) or 70 minutes (pints). Adjust pounds of pressure, as needed for altitudes above 1,000 feet, if necessary. See your canning book for directions.

Wild greens, canned in this way, will stay wholesome and tasty, nearly indefinitely. Be sure to mark the jars, regarding what type of green you have canned. I neglected to do this and can never tell what type of greens

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I am serving at a meal; we play “guess the green” while we eat. Is it spinach? Pigweed? Lamb’s Quarters? Oh well, they are all great eating.

While these and more wild greens are great eating, one more of our favorite spring wild food is not really a green, but appears at the same time.

Fiddleneck ferns

In the early spring, the tender shoots of ferns poke up suddenly through pine needles and debris of the forest floor. The shoots of bracken fern and ostrich fern are edible and very good. While the bracken fern is toxic when mature and eaten in bulk, the new shoots are edible and taste like asparagus.

Fiddlenecks (fern shoots that have a small curl at the top, resembling the neck of a violin) are covered with a fuzzy, papery sheath. They must be picked before the leaves appear, or

the stem becomes woody and tasteless.

Like asparagus, pick the youngest shoots, just after they emerge, cutting off just below the surface with a sharp knife. Wipe the papery and fuzzy membrane off as well as possible, then simply steam or boil until just tender. Remove from the pot and wipe off any clinging membrane or fuzz. Serve with butter or a cream sauce as you would asparagus and you have truly delectable eating.

Fiddlenecks can be home-canned to enjoy during the winter. In some parts of the country, they are harvested heavily just for this use. Process as you would asparagus after you have cleaned the stalks of their fuzz and membrane.

Some folks regard wild greens as a “survival” food. This is not giving them enough credit. While hundreds of wild foods are edible, these wild greens are truly scrumptious eating, deserving of being added to regular homestead meals. I hope you, like us, never quite regard a “weed” in the same light again. Δ

Brooder in a box

By Sylvia Gist

It's spring and the farm store has a tempting variety of baby chicks begging for you to take them home. Or the breed you've always wanted has been marked down. If you plan ahead a little, you can take advantage of the situation. Last spring, a local farm store was desperate to rid themselves of some roosters. Because I had the materials for the following brooder stored for just such an occasion, I took the chicks and within an hour, they were enjoying their new home. The inexpensive brooder described below will provide your chicks with a snug, happy home for several weeks.

The idea began when we had no place to put our first order of chicks, certainly nothing that resembled the setup pictured in the book we had borrowed from the library. In desperation, we decided to use a large cardboard box with a brooder lamp. It worked out so well for us here in northwest Montana that we make one every spring for our new batch of chicks.

Materials

To set up the brooder, you will need a large cardboard refrigerator box, some baling twine, a 250 watt brooder lamp (preferably with infrared bulb) and a chain to suspend it, and a stick or dowel about 6 feet long. Make it chick ready by adding a 1x6 board to set the feeder on, the top of a plastic 5 gallon bucket (or something of similar size and shape) to set a waterer on, a few optional boards to put under the box, litter for the floor (with a top layer of paper toweling the first two days), and chick waterers and feeders.

Setting up the box

First, get a large cardboard refrigerator box from an appliance dealer (Ask early if you want to be sure to get one.). The best ones are the ones on which the end was removed by cutting the strapping, not the cardboard. Select a location with accessible electricity in the building where you want to keep your chicks. This location should have a hook or something above the middle of it from which to hang the heat lamp. Take the empty box and reassemble it, replacing the missing strapping securely with baling twine. Then lay the box on its side, placing the largest surface on the floor. We found that slipping a few boards under the box at evenly spaced intervals provides air circulation and helps keep the bottom of the box dry.

Now you are ready to cut openings in the box. First mark the top. Draw one line across the box approximately in the middle, but always directly under the spot from which the light

will hang. Then draw 2 more lines from side to side, one at each end about 10 or 12 inches from the end of the box. At the front of the box, draw a line to connect all three of the crosswise lines, keeping the connecting line 6 or 8 inches from the front edge. (See illustration.) Next, without bending any cardboard, cut the line across the front (a box cutter or utility knife works well). Then cut each of the three lines which go from front to back, stopping 6-8 inches from the back.

You will have what looks like a split door. Next bend each door at the back to hinge upward. A long stick or a dowel can be laid lengthwise under the flaps to keep the flaps from falling into the box. The flaps can be raised by simply propping them up, or a length of twine can be strung through a puncture in the flap and secured to something at the back of the box. The need to adjust the flaps will depend primarily upon the temperature of the building.

The box will most likely be too high for the average person to reach into using the top flaps, so we cut a window flap in the front. We like the flap to hinge at the top; it is easier to keep it closed if the weather is chilly. But we have to prop it open to care



Why buy a more expensive brooder, when this box brooder works just as well?

for the chicks, the main reason for the flap. It also serves to ventilate the box on warm days. Be sure to make the front edge at least 12 inches high to keep the chicks from walking or jumping out.

Finishing touches

The next step is hanging the 250 watt heat lamp from a chain passing through the middle slit in the top flap, allowing the bulb to be about 18 inches above the floor. In order to get the chain to hang straight, you may have to put a notch in the roof flap of the box. Using S-hooks to connect the lamp with the chain allows us to adjust the height of the lamp to get the temperature right for the chicks. We usually have a safety chain, too, to make sure the light does not fall to the floor; any secure tie will do the job.

To complete the interior decor, we spread a two inch layer of pine wood shavings (locally available for us) on the bottom of the box, lay down a 1x6 board to put the feeder on, and install a plastic lid to set the waterer on. We have found that a plastic lid (from a 5-gallon plastic bucket) with a rim of some kind to put the gallon waterer on prevents spills on the floor, thus keeping the bedding drier. Putting the feeder up on a board seems to slow the accumulation of shavings in the feeders.

Now you are ready to install your baby chicks. The refrigerator box brooder will hold 25 chicks for 4 to 5 weeks (the larger the breed, the sooner they outgrow the box) if the box is large, or 50 for a shorter time. With more chicks, you can expand by adding a second box of some sort. We have had 2 brooder boxes, end to end, (both with lamps if heat was needed) going at the same time, connected by a large hole cut in the end of the box. You have to experiment and adapt to the situation you have.

This brooder is cheap, convenient, and disposable. It enables us to raise

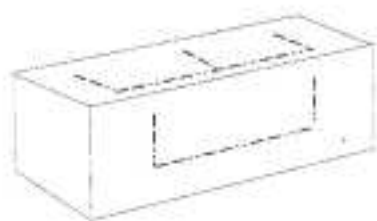


Diagram of cutting lines

chickens without having a lot of special brooder equipment or housing. When we are done with the box, it can be sent to the dump, burned, recycled, or used for mulch.

Making the chicks comfortable

1. Preheat the box. The temperature should be 95 degrees 2" above the floor at the outer edge of the lamp. Adjust lamp to reduce the temperatures about 5 degrees per week. While the glow from the infrared bulb discourages the chicks from picking other chicks, the heat can be intense, so monitor the temperatures in confined areas.

2. Put down paper toweling to keep chicks from eating the litter. Change often enough to keep it clean and remove on the third day when chicks are eating well.

3. Supply adequate fresh, clean water, about 1 quart per 25 chicks to begin. Disinfect waterer daily.

4. Provide enough feeder space: 1 slot per chick or 1" per chick in open feeders. For non broilers, keep feed available at all times.

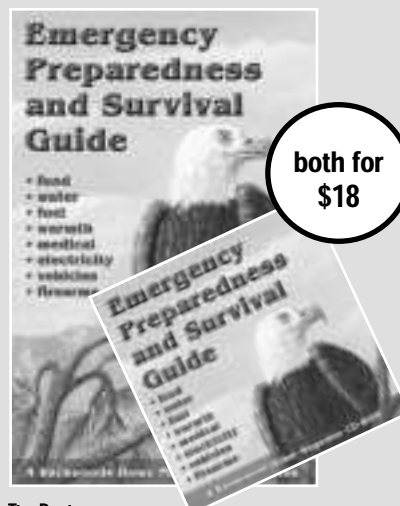
5. Put some feed on the paper toweling, a paper plate, cardboard, or even plastic lids for a few days to make sure all chicks find food right away.

6. Dip each chick's beak in water and make sure he drinks as you put him in the box.

7. Check frequently to make sure you have the temperature right and flaps on the box opened or closed appropriately. Happy chicks will wander freely, make musical sounds and sleep side by side. If they crowd

under the lamp, they are cold; if they stay around the edges of the box, they are hot; and if they huddle to one side, the box is drafty. If your box is in an unheated place, the outside temperatures will affect the inside. Watch the chicks and they will let you know if they are comfortable. We often closed them up completely on cold nights, but opened the box on warmer days. Δ

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Growing and using blueberries

By Charles A. Sanders

The rich taste of blueberries is one of those special and all too rare garden treats. But that doesn't have to be so. Blueberries can be grown on your place in a relatively small area with good results.

Blueberries (*Vaccinium* species) are erect woody perennial bushes belonging to the Heath family. I first became acquainted with blueberries when I found small wild varieties growing high atop the bluffs and rocks on the sharp ridges around my home area. Later, a canoe trip into the wilderness of Minnesota found me gathering bunches of the prolific wild fruit to go with pancakes. Finally, I started a few of my own bushes here at home, to have my own dependable supply of the sweet dark fruit.

Generally, blueberries can be grown if your winter temperatures are mostly above -20°F. You will also need a growing season of about 160 days or longer and at least 1000 hours of temperatures under 45°F during the winter. For southern growers, some species of Rabbiteye blueberries and southern species hybrids require less winter chilling. Those varieties can be grown as far south as the Gulf Coast. Blueberries are rather shallow rooted and do best where the water table is about 14 to 22 inches below the soil surface. Don't attempt to grow blueberries unless you can supply needed water when the rainfall is not adequate.

Most of the major tree and seedling suppliers sell blueberry starts. When purchasing your plants, try to get two-year-old plants that are 10 to 15 inches tall. Be certain not to let the roots dry out prior to transplanting. Keep them moist and covered. Dig a hole the size of a five-gallon bucket or larger and mix in some good

organic material such as sphagnum or peat moss with the soil. (As the mail order fruit tree suppliers used to state: "Dig a twenty dollar hole for a ten dollar tree.") Put about half the mixture in the hole, set the plant, and fill the hole with the rest of the soil mix. Blueberry plants should be spaced about 5 to 8 feet apart. If placed in rows, space the rows about 8 to 10 feet apart or wide enough to get your particular tractor, mower, etc. between the rows. Remember that the mature bushes themselves will get to be from 3 to 8 feet in diameter, so be sure to allow for that.

Blueberry bushes can make an attractive screen when planted in a row along a roadway or property line. They are also often planted in maintained rows, as indicated above.

It will take three or four years for your transplants to begin producing fruit. It is also a good idea to remove most or all of the first year blossoms. This will encourage vigorous plant growth instead of fruit growth during that important first year.

Blueberries are not very self-fertile. That means that two or more different

varieties must be planted in the same area to insure good pollination and good fruit crops. Blueberries require moist, yet well-drained acid soils. There are several commercially available soil amendments which can get your soil in the 4.8 to 5.2 pH acid range. I give my plants an annual dose of common 10-10-10 fertilizer in addition to any acidic soil amendments. With good fertilization and soil management, it is not uncommon for your cultivated bushes to reach 5 to 10 feet in height.

Blueberries require a good mulch as far out as the drip line of the plant. A thick mulch of sawdust or crushed corncobs is good. Oak leaves are also very good and help to supply the acid needed by the plants. I often use plain old pine needles around my plants. They are good mulch and also supply the acid that blueberries love. I head over to the nearby state forest and use a scoop shovel to gather piles of them that accumulate along the roadway that runs through the forest property.

When it comes to blueberries, I have found that insect pests are few. However, birds can wreak havoc in



A colander full of blueberries

your blueberry patch. Catbirds, Brown Thrashers, and similar songbirds love blueberries and seem to nail them just before you get out to pick them. One remedy I have had good success with is to purchase some simple toy pinwheels at your local dime store or Wally-World. I fastened a piece of ½-inch PVC pipe to a nearby fence post and just dropped the pinwheel in. The loose fit enabled the pinwheel to turn into the slightest breeze. The motion created by the shiny spinning toy has worked well in keeping the berry bandits at bay. While this works well for my few bushes, you may need to consider fine net coverings if you have a row of several bushes. I have used net coverings over rows of raspberries and they are very effective in reducing destruction of the fruit by birds.

Blueberry bushes will need to be pruned after about their fourth year. Don't be bashful with the pruners. You will need to prune out two main types of growth to encourage prolific fruit bearing—the very slender stems which do not bear much, and the oldest and largest branches which are probably bearing mainly at the tips.

On a healthy, mature blueberry bush, you may expect to harvest about 12-14 quarts of fruit each year. With a half dozen or more bushes, this can translate into some extra money for you. Depending upon your area, you should be able to easily earn \$2 to \$4 a quart for the fruit. However, if you only have two or three plants, you will be likely to use all the berries yourself. There are a variety of tasty ways to preserve and use blueberries. Let's look at a few.

Picking and preserving

If possible, it is best to let the blueberries hang on the bush for about a week after they turn dark blue. This will give you the sweetest, ripest berries that just roll off the stem into your hand as you pick. The downside of this is that the birds may give you

Season	Variety	Quality	Comments
Early	Earliblue	Good	Good producer. Freezes well.
Early	Collins	Good	Attractive large berries.
Mid	Berkeley	Fair	Big berries, productive. Cans well.
Mid	Bluecrop	Good	Large berries. Slightly earlier than Berkeley. Cans and freezes well.
Mid	Blueray	Good	Large berries. Cans well.
Mid	Jersey	Fair	Produces large crop. Freezes well.
Late	Coville	Good	Good variety to extend season. Berries tart until ripe. Cans well.
Late	Herbert	V. good	Productive. Large fruit.
Very late	Lateblue	Good	Large, productive.

a run for your money and beat you to the fruit. The kids may also keep the easy berries picked for you...and stuffed into their mouths. For picking, I just cut the top front out of a plastic milk jug and tie a long piece of binder twine through the handle. I then hang the loop over my shoulder and go to picking.

Blueberries may be frozen, dried, or canned. Freezing the fruit is perhaps the easiest way to put them up. We just wash and drain them, put them in freezer bags and throw them in the freezer.

Blueberries are also dried easily. Simply remove all the stems then quickly blanch the fruit just to break the skins. Dry until the berries are sort of chewy and leathery, like raisins. They are good eaten dried or may be reconstituted by using equal parts of berries and water and soaking for 10 to 15 minutes. Then, use as you would fresh berries.

Canning blueberries is not difficult. The hot pack method works well with them and is recommended. Wash the berries and drain them well. Add about a quarter cup of sugar for each quart of fruit. Cover the pan and bring the fruit to a boil. Pack the berries in jars to within ½-inch of the top. If the berries have not made enough juice, cover them with syrup. Process pints for 15 minutes, quarts for 20 minutes.

Blueberry recipes

Using blueberries is a pleasure. Simply tossing a handful into a bowl of pancake batter can turn breakfast into a tasty and aromatic pleasure with the resulting blueberry pancakes. Another time-tested favorite is sweet blueberry muffins.

Blueberry muffins

2 cups all-purpose flour
½ cup sugar
2 tsp. baking powder
½ tsp. salt
¼ tsp. cinnamon
¾ cup milk
½ cup butter or margarine, melted
½ tsp. vanilla
1 egg, slightly beaten
1 cup fresh (or frozen, thawed and drained) blueberries
1 tsp. sugar

Heat the oven to 400°. Grease the bottoms only of 12 medium muffin cups, or line with paper baking cups. Mix the flour, ½ cup sugar, the baking powder, salt, and cinnamon in a large bowl. Stir in the milk, butter, vanilla, and egg just until blended. Fold in the blueberries for a lumpy batter. Divide the batter evenly among the muffin cups. Sprinkle each muffin with ¼ tsp. sugar. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes or until nice and golden brown. Cool for 5 minutes; remove from pan. Makes 1 dozen muffins.

Blueberry jam

This is one of my personal favorites. Blueberry jam on a hot buttered biscuit is hard to beat. This recipe works well using a standard hot water bath.

4 cups crushed blueberries
2 Tbsp. lemon juice
1 pkg. Sure-jel pectin or
equivalent
4 cups sugar

Have your jelly jars ready in hot water. Add the berries and lemon juice to a saucepan. Add the pectin and bring the mixture to a full boil over high heat, stirring it constantly. Add the sugar and return it to a full boil for one minute. Keep stirring the whole time. Remove the mixture from heat and skim any foam which has formed if necessary. Take the jars from the hot water, one at a time and ladle the hot jam into the hot jars. Leave about ¼-inch headspace. Wipe the jar rims and threads and apply the lids-fingertip tight. As each jar is filled, place it in the canner of hot water. Once the canner is full, add hot water as needed to cover the lids a couple of inches. Put the lid on the canner and bring to a gentle boil for 10 minutes (You may need to adjust the time for altitude, adding 5 minutes for every 3,000 feet elevation.). After processing, remove the jars and place on a towel to cool. They should each seal themselves shortly. After each jar has sealed and cooled, remove the bands, wipe the jars clean and store.

Fresh blueberry pie

Probably one of the most popular uses for blueberries is to make a rich thick blueberry pie. You may want to try this quick and easy recipe:

1 baked 9-inch pie shell
4 cups fresh or frozen blueberries
1 cup sugar
3 Tbsp. cornstarch
¼ tsp. salt
¼ cup water
1 Tbsp. butter or margarine

Line the baked pie shell with 2 cups of blueberries. To make the sauce, cook the remaining berries with sugar, cornstarch, salt, and water over medium heat until thickened. Remove the mixture from heat; add butter and cool. Pour over the berries in the shell. Chill and serve with whipped cream.

Another blueberry pie recipe

Here is another great blueberry pie recipe using your favorite pie crust recipe.

To the pie crust, add the following ingredients:

4 cups blueberries
1 cup sugar
3 tsp. flour

Mix all the ingredients and add to the pie shell. Add the top pastry, crimp the edges and pierce the crust in a few spots. Now here is a trick. Using 3-inch strips of aluminum foil, cover the crimped edge of the pie crust. Now bake the pie for 25 minutes at 350°. Then remove the foil strips and bake the pie for another 25 minutes. This will result in a nicely browned, yet not overdone pie crust edge.

Blueberry syrup

Maine is probably known as the Mother of all blueberry-producing regions. Here is a simple recipe from that area to make Maine blueberry syrup.

Simmer together the following ingredients:

2 cups blueberries
½ cup sugar
½ cup water
1 thin slice of lemon

Simmer for about 10 to 15 minutes. Makes about 2 ½ cups.

I hope this article encourages you to try your hand at growing and using blueberries. Once you get your bushes established and begin harvesting and using the dark blue fruit, you will wonder why it took you so long to get to know this gourmet treat. Δ

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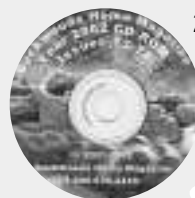
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CHAPTER 1: POINT BLANK

By Robert Waters

This is the first installment of Robert A. Waters' *Guns Save Lives*. Future issues of *BHM* will contain some other chapters of Waters' book.

"Why'd you shoot me, bitch?" — Last words of home invader Shaarod Proffitt, September 18, 1998.

It was a cool fall evening in Little Rock, Arkansas, when Don Mosely heard the storm door rattling. Thinking his brother was outside, the sixty-year-old disabled homeowner walked to the door and opened it.

A masked man stood on the porch. He wore dark clothes and a black stocking mask knotted at the top. Holes had been cut out for his eyes and mouth. "Just like you see on television," Mosely later recalled.

He had little time to react.

The man pointed a gun at Mosely and demanded, "Gimme your car keys!"

When Mosely didn't respond, the assailant raised the barrel of the gun and stuck it in the homeowner's face.

"Gimme your keys!" he ordered again.

In a recent interview, Mosely recalled, "He had a .22-caliber Marlin semiautomatic rifle. He'd cut the stock off and made it into a pistol-grip. I grabbed the barrel of the gun and his first shot hit the door-facing. We wrestled around and I almost got it away from him. But he ended up shooting me."

Doctors later determined that the bullet, which had been fired point-blank into his stomach, had careened down into Mosely's right thigh. Although he felt little pain, his leg went numb, and he fell to the floor.

The suddenness of the attack stunned Mosely. He decided to play dead, hoping the intruder wouldn't shoot him again.

Lying still, he thought of the gun he'd hidden beside his chair. If he could get to it, he might be able to stop the assailant.

Just moments before the stranger had appeared at their door, Mosely and his wife, Jane, had returned home after dining at a local restaurant with Don's brother. While Don settled down in his rocker, Jane grabbed a bowl of cereal from the kitchen and walked back into the bedroom.

When he heard the door rattling, Don assumed it was his brother coming back to the house to pick up something he'd left.

Oh my God, he thought. This guy's gonna kill my wife.

Don and Jane Mosely had lived in the comfortable home on Richland Drive for thirty-nine years. The couple had raised their children there, but their memories belied today's reality. In the last few years, they'd watched helplessly as the neighborhood had changed. Now gang members lurked on street corners selling drugs and looking for trouble. Neighbors who used to wave or stop to chat now quickly disappeared into their own residences.

Even though times had changed, Jane, who was known by the children in the community as "Mom," still provided candy and cakes as treats to the neighborhood children. She always had a ready smile for those trapped in the bleak surroundings.

Now the thug stood over Don Mosely, as if deciding whether to shoot again.

At that moment, Mosely heard a thud in the bedroom.

The intruder also heard it and suddenly sprinted away. Don raised his head and saw the man disappear down the hall.

He was headed straight toward the bedroom!

Oh my God, he thought. This guy's gonna kill my wife.

Mosely pulled himself to his feet. But he fell when he tried to walk. He stood again. After a few moments, he found that if he dragged his leg behind him, he could maneuver enough to get around.

He was surprised he wasn't bleeding more. A smear of blood about the size of a silver dollar spotted the floor where he'd lain.

"I had a little American Arms .22-caliber Magnum revolver," he said. "It was sitting beside my chair. I picked it up, but my leg wouldn't work very well. Before I could get all the way back there, I could already hear them shooting."

Jane Mosely had been sitting on the edge of the bed eating her cereal. She'd turned on the television and placed the telephone beside her. When she heard Don get up and go to the door, she also thought that her husband's brother had returned.

"But when I heard a stranger's voice at the door, I knew something was wrong," Jane recalled in a recent interview. "So I picked up the phone and dialed 911. Then I heard the shots and heard my husband moan. I thought he was dead. That's when I crossed the room to get my gun out of the closet."

The couple usually kept their .32-caliber Smith & Wesson snub-nosed

revolver beside the bed. But because their grandchildren had been visiting recently, Jane had placed it on a shelf in the closet.

She figured it would only be a matter of time before the intruder headed for the bedroom.

After retrieving the gun, Jane sought refuge behind a chest of drawers in the back corner of the room. It seemed to offer at least some protection.

Jane muttered a quick prayer and waited for the gunman to appear. Crouched behind the chest of drawers, she followed his shadow as it moved across the doorway.

His appearance startled her. With his black mask, his dark clothes, and lithe figure, he reminded her of a ninja warrior.

Then she saw the gun.

She was still talking to the dispatcher when he entered the room. But as soon as she saw him, Jane threw the phone on the floor. She later learned that the entire gunfight had been recorded on the 911 tape.

The masked intruder edged cautiously into the room.

As soon as he saw Jane, he fired.

The shot slammed into the chest of drawers, causing the housewife to flinch.

Jane recalled, "He had to come pretty far into the room to be able to shoot me because I was backed up in the corner and had some protection from the chest of drawers. When he saw me, he spun around and aimed his gun at me. Then we both started shooting at each other. Police later said he fired eleven shots. I don't have any recollection of how many shots I fired. I don't remember when I was hit in the arm, but I did feel the bullet that hit me in the groin."

She aimed at his head and pressed the trigger. The blast deafened her.

The small bedroom had become a war zone. The gunman's volleys thudded into the wall behind her. A television that sat on the chest of

drawers took a direct hit—the glass shattered, stinging her face. The intruder continued to move toward Jane, still shooting.

The first time she was hit, Jane felt panic surge up inside her. But she knew she had to remain calm. She fired again, and continued to pull the trigger until the gun no longer fired.

Jane remembered, "He kept coming closer and closer, firing all the time. There was a little stool in front of the dresser, and he crouched behind that stool. He was constantly raising up and shooting at me."

By now, Jane's revolver was empty. She continued squeezing the trigger, only to hear it clicking into an empty chamber.

She was bleeding, and the pain in her abdomen was excruciating.

Now her assailant was just a few feet away. She could see that she had hit him at least twice—blood pumped from an open wound to his throat, and his mask had turned crimson.

"When I got back there," he said, "[the gunman] and my wife were on the floor in the damndest puddle of blood you've ever seen. They were struggling for the gun—he kept trying to point the barrel towards my wife, and she kept pushing it back."

He held the rifle as if it were a pistol. It was then that, like her husband, she noticed the stock had been cut off and carved into a pistol-grip.

The man seemed determined to kill her, like some madman in a cheap stalker movie. She was bleeding heavily. If I get shot again, Jane thought, I'm dead.

By now, the gunman had closed the distance to less than a foot. In desper-

ation, Jane flung her empty gun to the floor, and grabbed the barrel of his rifle.

The gunman tried to wrench it away, and the two combatants fell to the floor. He landed on top of her and somehow squeezed off another round. The bullet missed Jane and plowed into the floor. The assailant attempted to twist the barrel into her torso so that he could shoot her again, but the fear of dying drove her to push it away.

The struggle lasted for about two minutes. But it seemed like forever to Jane Mosely.

She thought of her children.

I will *not* die, she thought. I *will* survive.

Don Mosely later recalled the horrific scene he saw when he entered the bedroom.

"When I got back there," he said, "[the gunman] and my wife were on the floor in the damndest puddle of blood you've ever seen. They were struggling for the gun—he kept trying to point the barrel towards my wife, and she kept pushing it back."

The stool had been knocked to the floor and a lamp had shattered. Bullet holes dotted the walls, and splinters of wood from the chest of drawers lay on the floor.

But what struck Mosely was the complete silence as the two fought desperately for the gun.

He dragged his lame leg toward them, using the bedpost to help steady himself.

By now the gunman was straddling Jane. She lay on her back, still holding onto the sawed-off rifle.

When Don Mosely was less than a foot from the assailant, he placed the pistol against the man's head.

At point-blank range, the homeowner pulled the trigger. At the crack of the gunshot, the invader dropped to his knees. He loosened his grip on the rifle, allowing Jane to wrench it from him.

Don cocked the gun and fired again. The man's body went limp, and he collapsed to the floor.

Jane Mosely lay in the corner of the room where she'd made her stand. Her dress was stained crimson, and now her body ached all over. But she was jubilant to see that her husband had survived.

The gunman lay beside her, gasping. Blood still pumped out of the wound to his neck.

Don Mosley recalled, "I grabbed his gun and threw it up on the bed. Then I picked up the phone, and told the dispatcher we'd both been shot."

Blood from Jane and the intruder flowed to form a pool on the floor.

She paused, and said, "Thank God we knew how to protect ourselves."

She thought the masked man was dead. But he slowly raised his head. Twisting toward Jane, he asked, "Why'd you shoot me, bitch?" They were the last words Shaarod Profitt ever said.

Jane later recalled that she was incredulous that he would ask such question. Although she didn't respond, she thought, why do you think I shot you?

Police had been instructed by dispatchers to treat the call as a domestic disturbance. Don Mosely, standing in the hall, still held his gun when the first officers arrived. He was ordered to put his weapon down, then he was forced to the floor and handcuffed.

Investigators at the scene quickly determined what had happened. The handcuffs were removed, and Don Mosely was examined by paramedics. Unlike the gunman and his wife, he'd bled very little.

The wounded homeowners were placed on stretchers and rushed to local hospitals. Both Jane Mosely and

the intruder, identified as teenager Shaarod Profitt, were transported to Baptist Hospital, while Don was sent to University Hospital.

During exploratory surgery, Don developed a staph infection and had to be hospitalized several times before recuperating. Jane Mosely spent five days in the hospital, but eventually recovered completely.

Shaarod Profitt died the following day.

After a lengthy investigation, police arrested a second suspect, Tyrone Cooper, and charged him with being an accomplice. Through interviews with Cooper and other witnesses, investigators put together the following sequence of events that led to the foiled home invasion.

Profitt, Cooper, and an unidentified gang member had seen Don Mosely driving a new Chrysler LHS and decided to steal it.

Dressed in dark clothing and masks, they walked up the porch. Just as they were about to kick the door in, Don Mosely opened it. Almost immediately, he began to fight for his life with the gunman. Profitt's accomplices fled as soon as the first shot was fired.

A neighbor had seen the strange trio walk up onto the steps to the Mosely home and called police. The witness recognized Profitt and Cooper but not the third robber.

Witnesses pointed out to police a house that Cooper had entered and he was quickly arrested. A mask, duct tape, and knife were found in a yard nearby.

He later plea-bargained a sentence of twenty-five years in prison. By law, Cooper must serve all of his sentence without the possibility of parole.

Not surprisingly, Don and Jane Mosely take gun ownership seriously. In a recent interview, Jane said, "I think everybody ought to be able to own guns and I don't think people should be forced to put trigger locks

on them. I know if there had been one on the gun I used, I wouldn't be here. I'm also against having to register your guns. I just think they're taking too much of our freedom away. [Our family has] always had guns, and we taught our children how to use guns safely."

She paused, and said, "Thank God we knew how to protect ourselves."

Don concurred. "My wife and I used to go out every weekend and target practice with handguns," he said. He states that he believes the Federal and state governments do not have the right to pass gun control legislation.

Don also has his own theory about why he and Jane were shot.

"If [Profitt] didn't intend to kill us," he said, "why didn't he leave after shooting me instead of going back to the bedroom after my wife? They planned to kill both of us to get the car. It might have even been a gang initiation. But I know he came in here with murder on his mind."

Both Don and Jane Mosely agree that had they not owned firearms they would both be dead. And they wonder how many other victims would have died at the hands of Profitt and Cooper had they been allowed to continue their lives of crime.

Don and Jane Mosley recently moved to a new neighborhood to be closer to their children and grandchildren. They feel safe there. But they still keep their guns ready. Just in case.

You can now order Robert A. Waters' complete book, *Guns Save Lives*, for \$18.95, which includes shipping and handling, by using the order form on page 89. Δ

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the *gee-whiz!* page

By O.E. MacDougal

Photography

If you go through old history books, you'll find photographs that include family portraits, politicians, outlaws, lawmen, all with dour faces. It's easy to imagine that the grim look most of them wore was a sign of hard lives and the times they lived in.

Nothing could be further from the truth. The reason people are unsmiling is because of the long exposure times of the photographic plates. Exposures could take anywhere from several seconds to a minute or more. No one was expected to hold a smile that long. The fact is, rather than smiling your objective was not to move anything at all because with such long exposure times, almost any movement would cause a blur.

To prevent movement, many photography studios had metal braces along the walls. The idea was that you would back up to one of the braces and let it hold your neck still. Then you tried not to move any other part of your body. Blinking was okay because your eyelids would move so fast they didn't blur the film. But you had to make it a point to *stare* at a fixed object across the room and not move your eyes at all, because if your eyes moved too much your pupils wouldn't show and in the resulting photograph you'd look like a zombie.

Hence, the stern look on the faces in the photos taken by Matthew Brady and his contemporaries. Otherwise, those people were just as happy and smiling in their lives as you and I are in ours.

Roads of wood

Roads are among the most common sights of civilization. They are, in fact, so common that we take them for granted. But the history of commerce, warfare, and the spread of civilization are closely linked to the existence of roads. And paved roads go back at least 4500 years to ancient Egypt.

The Romans were the great road builders of their time and they held their Empire together by the construction of roads over which commerce and armies could move. Many of their roads, though rebuilt and resurfaced, are still in use today.

Road construction is part science and part mathematics. Curves on modern roads are segments of circles, so we don't have to keep readjusting the steering as we drive on the curve, and hills are shaped like parabolas, to ensure a smooth transition from the upside to the downside.

Modern roads have deep bearing layers to accommodate the weight of traffic and wearing surfaces that protect the bearing layer beneath. The current multilane highway system in the United States is built so the first and second lanes have a deeper bearing surface than the other lanes. By having only one or two of the several lanes with deep substrata, money is saved in construction. It's the real reason large trucks are confined to these lanes except when passing.

Through history, roads have been paved with dirt, sand, gravel, cobblestone, bricks, and today with asphalt and concrete. But what many don't know is that one of the time-honored materials used to pave roads was wood. Such roads were called "cor-

duroy" roads because the logs lying parallel across the roads recalled the image of corduroy fabric. Gravel, brick, and stone were the preferred materials, but in swampy and low, wet areas, where stones settled and disappeared and wheels would sink and become almost impossible to move, logs were used because they "floated" on the mud.

Sometimes the log "paving" ran less than 100 feet, just enough to cross some muddy ground. Other times they went on for miles and miles.

Traffic, including horses and wagons, microbes, insects, and the elements wore the roads away. However, with some maintenance, many corduroy roads, particularly, those made with cedar, lasted for decades. But they had other drawbacks. Travel was slow and extremely bumpy. And horses could break legs if their hooves slipped between the logs. Sometimes, the ends of the logs sprouted and, if not cut back, would grow into full-sized trees.

To make them a little more hospitable, the roads were often covered with a layer of sand—never dirt which would start the logs to rotting. Other times they were even covered with planks to smooth out the ride.

Corduroy roads were a common sight in many parts of America. But gradually, all of them rotted away or were dug up and replaced with sand, gravel, and finally the modern paving surfaces.

Though once there were thousands of them, today hardly anyone even realizes roads that were paved with wood were an integral part of the system of highways that holds America together.

MOSQUITOES

outnumber us and no one likes them

By Tom and Joanne O'Toole

Mosquitoes are responsible for irritating bites, cause itching welts, can spread diseases, are a constant aggravation at picnics, and are ear-tormenting little beasts. No wonder they are so disliked.

Like many other things in nature's cycle, there are thousands of different species of mosquitoes around the world, all with varying flight habits, food and climate preferences, and breeding requirements. Only two things are constant. The females need a blood supply to lay their eggs, and water in which the eggs must hatch.

These vicious blood-sucking buggers are hearty and adaptable, surviving freezing temperatures and hundred-degree heat. The mosquito "season" is year around in hot, humid parts of North America, while in other areas the cycle begins and ends at different times of the year depending on the climate. Usually, wet, warm, spring and summer months are peak times when the critters are hungriest. The northern fringes of the United States and all of Canada have the shortest mosquito seasons.

So where's the heaviest concentration of these creatures? You'd think some place like the Florida Everglades. Well, the experts say the Alaskan and Canadian tundra are the most infested areas. In fact, in the arctic, mosquitoes hatch in such multitudes that they can turn the sky gray.

If you want to get technical, the pesky mosquito is a member of the fly family, having the mouth parts elongated into a proboscis equipped for piercing and sucking. They have scales on their wings and antennae which are markedly hairy in the male, but less hairy in the female. They are

also one of the most irritating insects known to man, always managing to buzz their way into our otherwise peaceful lives.

Only the adult females bite, as they need a protein blood meal to develop the eggs before they can reproduce. In fact, females can sip almost twice their own weight in blood. The male has different mouth parts, and must be content to be a vegetarian, supplementing his diet with nectar and plant juices.

Mosquitoes find their victims—both human and animal—by flying into the wind and picking up sensor beams which they follow to their

meal. These beams include the concentration of carbon dioxide which is emitted with exhaled breath, and lactic acid which is produced by muscle movement. Moist skin and a warm body is an immediate target, and the female is able to detect the slightest change in temperature. They know when you're near!

These heat-seeking insects are drawn to dark colors, hair, and fur, but are also drawn to people because of scented grooming products like after-shave, perfume, cologne, and body lotions, as well as perspiration and body odor. Yet humans and animals are not their only victims. They also go after birds, frogs, turtles, and even snakes.

Thankfully, other wildlife that share the same habitat, such as dragonflies, water insects, fish, water and insect-

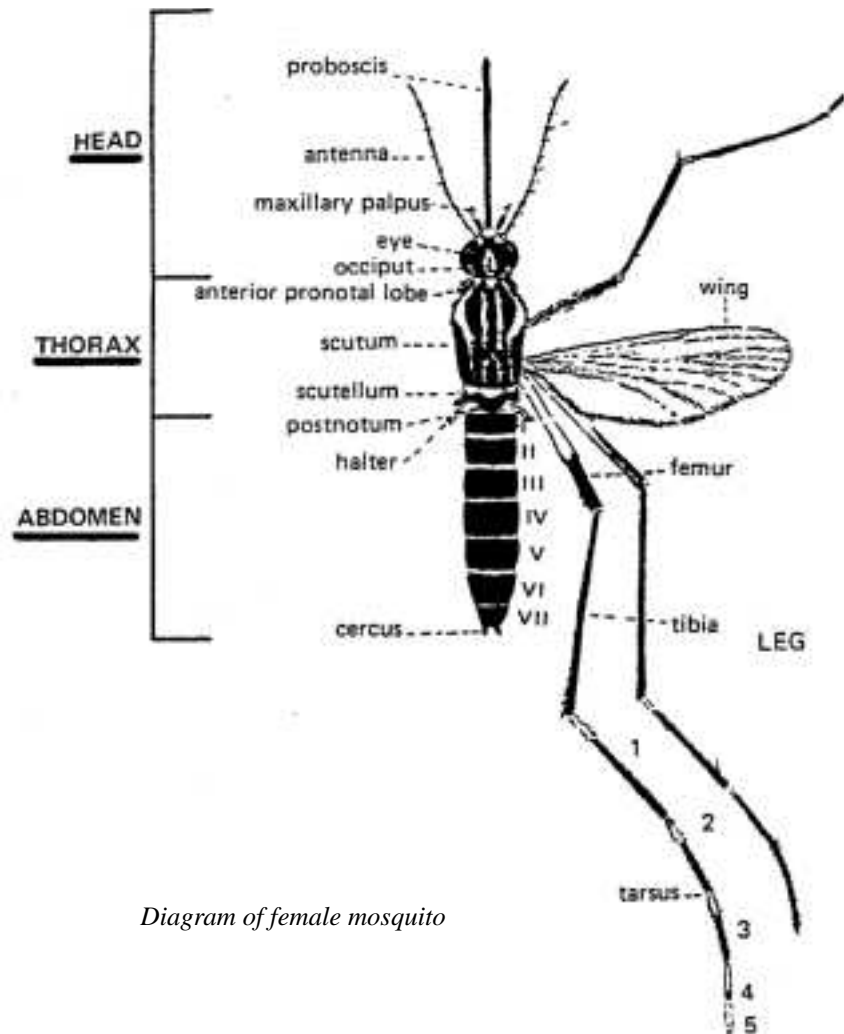


Diagram of female mosquito

tivorous birds, and bats prey on mosquitoes. Although it's of little comfort, mosquitoes have pests bothering them too, in the way of tiny mites and midges.

While the biting female appears to have a simple tube-like snout, it is actually a protective sheath around a hollow, flexible canal up which blood is drawn, a saliva duct that carries anti-coagulant into the wound, and four cutting stylets to penetrate the skin as they work alternately up and down—sort of sawing or stabbing their way through.

When a mosquito penetrates a victim, it injects saliva to ease the blood flow which also acts as an anesthesia on the skin in order for the insect to bite without being initially detected. The substance then creates an allergic reaction on the skin, it itches, we scratch, and this develops into a welt.

Worse, some types of mosquitoes are capable of carrying and transmitting a variety of diseases, including malaria, yellow fever, dengue fever, as well as four major types of encephalitis (a viral disease causing inflammation of the brain). However, organized mosquito control in North America has greatly reduced the incidence of these diseases.

With a mate and a blood supply, the female needs only water in which to hatch her eggs—the smaller and less disturbed the better. In her 60-day life cycle, she can lay thousands of eggs in puddles, birdbaths, watering troughs, rain barrels, and pet dishes—in clean or foul water, it makes no difference. Eggs thrive in stagnant water, as well as in a humid swamp or marsh. Breeding sites are as diverse as depressions in the woods, gutters and flat roofs that hold water, sewage pipes, discarded tires, old tin cans, and basins in city streets. For some species the life cycle begins in a week to 10 days, or eggs can lie dormant for several years just waiting for water.

After hatching, mosquitoes quickly go through the larvae and pupae stages before reaching adulthood. Just hatched larvae—known as “wigglers” because they squirm like worms in the water—are equipped with a breathing tube opening near the end of the abdomen. They eat constantly, feeding on bacteria, pollen, and microscopic plants. Some species also eat other mosquito larvae.

The pupae is known as a “tumbler” because it rolls and tumbles through the water, staying near the top so it can breathe. Usually within two weeks the adult mosquito emerges for its seasonal existence, with the male living about half as long as a female.

After a couple of weeks the female is looking for its blood supply, and is ready to reproduce. Humans are also ready to whack them whenever they land on their skin, but that age-old method of swatting the biters is only effective in eliminating that one particular insect.

There are trillions of mosquitoes all over North America, and experts predict the ratio of people to mosquitoes each season at about 1 to 41,000.

Ouch! Public agencies in the United States and Canada spend millions of dollars annually trying to eliminate them or at least control them.

Methods of control are numerous, ranging from destroying habitats, draining breeding places, spraying, treating surface water with kerosene, to lighting smudge pots.

As each individual has a different level of attractiveness to mosquitoes, so every hiker, camper, hunter, fisherman, boater, and other outdoor enthusiast has a favorite personal remedy for warding off the annoying insect.

Early man spread mud and animal fat on his skin to prevent bites. As we became more sophisticated mosquito-deterrents included pine oil, camphor, citronella, pennyroyal, cedarwood, eucalyptus, wintergreen, turpentine, and oil in any form. Orange peels

worn around the neck were also believed to be effective.

Today there is a wide variety of repellents (sprays, creams, and lotions), but these do not drive mosquitoes away, they merely confuse the insect's sensors so they aren't able to recognize you as a potential meal. The repellents keep the pests from biting (rather than killing them), and when they start buzzing around again, it's time to re-apply to all exposed skin, and sometimes even your clothing.

There are endless remedies to ward away mosquitoes, and Avon's Skin-So-Soft Bath Oil seems to work wonders. There's also OFF, Cutter's, Ben's, Repel, Ben's Max, and other products with DEET (N, N-diethyl-meta-toluamide). If you want to avoid DEET-based repellents, look for Tender's Natrapel. These come in a variety of uses—non-aerosol pump sprays, liquids, squeeze bottles, aerosol cans, single-use foil packets, towelettes, and lotions. To keep a yard mosquito-free, Raid Yard Guard seems to have a proven track record. Remember, these are all temporary solutions.

However, when mosquitoes do get through the defenses, and you are bitten, there are a few things you can do to help stop the itching. It is recommended the bite be swabbed with household ammonia every hour or so; calamine lotion can be dabbed directly on the bite; and if the itching persists, take a cool bath or shower.

But wait! Not everything works as it is meant to. Some years ago a British publicity stunt for a new repellent backfired when 3,000 starved mosquitoes—released into a booth with a model slathered with the new product—escaped and attacked the audience of businessmen and journalists who were there for the demonstration. Wonder if that same firm is going to demonstrate a new shark repellent? Δ

Leaves of three, let them be!

By Tom and Joanne O'Toole

If you've ever had poison ivy dermatitis you're among millions of others who have had the same distressing experience. It's probably the most common skin allergy in North America. It is also the most aggravating, frustrating, and tormenting of rashes.

Statistics suggest about half the population is allergic. Being immune one year is no guarantee you won't be sensitive the next. Showing little partiality, it affects people of all ages, and both sexes equally. Estimates are that each year poison ivy causes about two million cases of skin poisoning serious enough to require either medical attention, or at least a day of restricted activity. There are another 18 million annual cases that cause weeks of itching and unsightly blisters.

While people are susceptible to poison ivy any time of the year, it is much more prevalent in spring and summer when the leaves are in full bloom, and people are involved in more outdoor activities.

So what is this irksome pest? Knowing the enemy by sight can be a big help in avoiding it. The green leaves have the distinctive characteristic of always appearing in clusters of three (remember the old adage, "leaves of three, let them be"), often shiny on top, slightly hairy underneath, with either smooth or slightly toothed edges, and each with a pointed tip. The middle leaf at the end of the stalk is slightly longer than the other two which have no stems.

Drooping clusters of small green flowers grow at the base of the leaves, and by fall, hard little whitish waxy berries ripen, and last into winter. Birds love the berries, and drop the seeds for new growth far and

wide. As autumn arrives the leaves turn a bright scarlet, orange, and yellow, adding to the colorful fall landscape.

The most common form of poison ivy is the climbing vine variety, and it thrives in woods, fields, thickets, along fences, wrapping itself around trees and telephone poles, and growing up walls. It can climb the sides of houses, up and over fences, find a

home in flower beds, as well as in hedges and shrubbery. This woody vine climbs by means of its aerial roots and has a remarkable capacity for survival under the worst conditions.

When there is nothing to attach itself to, it takes the form of a shrub or bush, and can live in dry areas, pastures, around rocks, and near water. In this form it's frequently



referred to as poison oak, and is predominant in the west and southwest part of the U.S. In other areas it is called poison sumac when it becomes a small tree.

What causes the violent skin reaction is the yellowish resin (cardol) found in the leaves, stems, bark, roots, flowers, and berries. The plant is saturated with this volatile oil. A chemical found in the resin is the phenolic poison urushiol (yoo-ROO-shee-ol) which actually causes the rash.

The milky-to-clear sap is not on the surface of the leaves, but appears whenever the plant is broken, cut, or bruised. It takes very little of it to cause a severe inflammation, and the slightest brush can result in a painful irritation.

While you must come in contact with urushiol to get the poison ivy rash, the sticky resin can be carried to your skin from domestic animals that bring the misery to you on their fur, from clothing, outdoor equipment, walking sticks, firewood, garden tools, or any object that has touched a broken or bruised poison ivy vine or plant.

The urushiol vaporizes when burned, and is then carried in the air. Inhaling the smoke of brush fires containing this cursed plant can be toxic, causing internal blisters and serious lung infections.

Initial symptoms of the rash are reddish streaks, blotches, and clear blisters—sometimes appearing within a few hours, or delayed for several days, but usually within 12-24 hours. The signs are often accompanied by oozing, scaling, scabbing, and the ever-present itching.

Lasting 10-24 days, there are sometimes lingering effects to areas of the skin—especially the forearms—that seem as though they will never heal.

Fortunately the rash itself is not contagious. Although you cannot get it by touching someone who already has it, the rash can be transmitted

from another person if the oil is still on their skin.

Spreading poison ivy to different parts of the body is usually the result of touching one area with another soon after exposure while the resin is still on the skin. Once the rash develops, the urushiol has already penetrated, and it will not spread.

There are, of course, myths connected with the poison ivy plant. Although some people are immune, eating the poison ivy leaves isn't going to make you immune. Eating the leaves can result in a serious reaction, and even death. Another fallacy is that one or more attacks renders you less prone to get it. Often, it's just the opposite.

Like the common cold, there is no sure cure for poison ivy, but there are ways to achieve some relief. Sometimes the rash can be minimized if the exposed skin is washed with a strong alkali soap soon after contact. Fels naphtha seems to be a recommended favorite.

Another remedy is to swab the affected area with a mixture of equal parts of vinegar, buttermilk, and salt. This dries the skin and prevents the blisters from oozing.

Home remedies like calamine lotion, Benadryl, and witch hazel can help relieve some of the pain and itching, as will washing the rash areas with a strong solution of baking soda. Analgesic-anesthetic medicines like Rhulispay or Rhuligel can ease itching and lessen scratching. Rhuli medicines in poison ivy country are excellent itch insurance. Do all you can to avoid scratching the rash, as it can lead to infection.

For severe reactions, see your physician. He can prescribe a cortisone cream or antihistamine to help relieve the itching discomfort.

A new quick-drying lotion is the USFDA-approved Ivy Block. However, this product must be applied before you come in contact

with poison ivy. It forms a barrier, and is a preventive measure.

If you get caught up in poison ivy, you should also wash your clothing, gear, and anything else you suspect of contamination.

There are several ways to rid your property of poison ivy. If the soil is loose enough, you can lift up long sections of roots with a garden fork. The best time is after a rain when the soil is soft.

Another tactic is to apply an herbicide in spring or summer when the vine is in full leaf, covering as much of the plant as possible.

Recommended preparations include Amitrol-T, Ammate, Roundup, Kleenup, Weed-B-Gone, Ortho Poison Ivy Killer, 33-Plus, and other selected products.

Perhaps the best way to avoid that all-too-common woodland nemesis poison ivy is to be able to recognize it, then keep your distance. Δ

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Ask Jackie

Home canned bologna and corned beef, homemade sun dried tomatoes, sweet potato butter

Thank you for answering my questions on smoked fish and baked beans canning. You mentioned you can bologna and corned beef. Would you please share the recipe?

James R. Coffey
Elkton, MD

Glad I was of help. That's what I'm here for, after all. And the more people I can help out, the better, as far as I'm concerned. As for the recipes, here are two that work for us:

Home canned bologna:

25 lbs. fresh ground meat
1 lb. Morton's tender quick
1 tsp. garlic powder
4 tsp. liquid smoke
½ tsp. saltpeter
¾ cup brown sugar
1 oz. coarse ground black pepper

Grind the meat twice, adding spices etc., as you grind, and mix well. Put in an enameled turkey roaster, covered, and let set in a cool place for three days. A refrigerator works fine. Grind again and pack into wide mouth pint jars to within an inch of the top. Wipe the rims clean and place a previously boiled, warm lid on the jar and screw down the ring firmly tight. Place in a pressure canner and process for 90 minutes at 10 pounds, adjusting the pressure as needed to allow for altitude. (Check your canning book for these adjustments.)

This bologna is very good and doesn't taste like "store" bologna (which we hate). It kind of tastes like a cross between good liver sausage

and corned beef. We like it sliced from the jar and fried. I hope you'll like it, too.

Home canned corned beef:

To corn the beef, choose well-chilled beef and remove all the bones. You may use the brisket, rump, or chuck roasts. Cut the meat into uniform pieces and weigh the entire pile. Allow 2 to 2½ pounds of salt for each 25 pounds of beef. Sprinkle a layer of salt on the bottom of a crock. Place a layer of meat in the crock and add more salt. Continue packing in this manner until all the meat has been packed. Cover the top layer with a good layer of salt.

Allow the packed meat to remain in the salt for 24 hours, in a cool place, covered to prevent debris and insects from falling into the crock. Then cover the salted meat with this solution:

2 lbs. sugar
2 oz. saltpeter
1 oz. baking soda
2 gallons of water

Make a spice bag containing 1 ounce pickling spices and two or more (to taste) crushed cloves of garlic. Place the bag in the brine with the meat. Be certain that all the meat is completely covered with brine. Place a China plate on top and weight it down to keep meat submerged.

The meat is cured for 30 days at 38° to 40° F. If the temperature gets warmer, the brine will get ropy, which means that it feels snotty and stringy when you dip your finger into the brine. If this should happen,



Jackie Clay

immediately drain all the brine and rinse the meat it well. Throw away the old brine and make new brine and cover. Be sure to check your pickling meat often, especially if the temperature fluctuates and could go above 40°.

At the end of the brining period, remove the meat from the brine, rinse well and drain. Pat it dry with a clean towel.

To can the corned beef, soak the meat for two hours in clean water, then boil it slowly in clean water for 30 minutes. Remove the meat from the boiling water and cut it into pieces that will pack into wide-mouth pint or quart jars. Pack the jars to within an inch of the top of the jar. Add liquid, in which the meat was boiled, to within an inch of the top. Wipe the rim of the jar clean. Place previously boiled jar lids in place and screw down ring firmly-tight. Process in your pressure canner for 90 minutes at 10 pounds pressure, adjusting pressure, if necessary to make allowances for altitude. (See your canning book for instructions.)

This corned beef is very good and tender. I hope you will like it.

Jackie

Can you tell me how to make sun dried tomatoes like they sell at gourmet shops? We like them on pizza and pastas.

Carol Williams
Santa Barbara, CA

Actually, sun dried tomatoes are simply dehydrated tomatoes, usually tomato halves. And tomatoes dry very well at home. The trick to "gourmet" dehydrated tomatoes is to use a thick-meated, thin skinned, quite sweet variety. I dehydrate two main kinds, an extra-sweet yellow cherry tomato, Sungold, which tastes almost like a dried apricot when dehydrated, and a largish, red cherry-plum type, Principe Borghese. Principe Borghese is an Italian heirloom developed especially for sun drying, where the entire vine was pulled and draped over the garden fence to dry the tomatoes naturally in the sun.

While this method does work very well in some climates, many folks have a damper climate and the tomatoes dried in this manner would mold before drying. I prefer to simply harvest the ripe tomatoes, pull the stem out, and slice them in half, drying them cut side up on a cookie sheet in my gas oven with only the pilot light on or on racks in a dehydrator. They are done when shriveled and tough-leathery. The dehydrated tomatoes can be stored in any airtight container such as a gallon glass jar. Be absolutely sure they are dehydrated well or they can mold.

You can find Principe Borghese seed at several seed houses, including Pinetree Garden Seeds, Box 300, New Gloucester, ME 04260. Sungold is a common yellow tomato found in most seed catalogs.

To use the dehydrated tomatoes, simply add to any moist tomato (or other) sauce. They rehydrate rapidly and retain their exceptional taste.

Jackie

I'm looking for a recipe for sweet potato butter. The sweet kind that would be spreadable on muffins, toast, etc. I have found several recipes but none with canning directions. As I would like to put them up, I would like help. Would any recipe I might find that says to pack in canning jars be okay to water bath them, and how long for?

Nancy
jazzy@dnet.net

I have an old, old sweet potato butter recipe for canning that I have used and I would assume one could use any spice or variation, as long as the sugar to sweet potato ratio remained about the same, since the sugar preserves the low acid fruit, just as it does for pumpkin butter. Now I can't "recommend" that you can this preserve as it isn't approved or tested by experts. But the ratio of mashed, cooked sweet potatoes to sugar is to every cup of mashed sweet potatoes add three quarters of a cup of sugar and a pinch of salt and spices (cinnamon, cloves and allspice) to taste. I use brown sugar, but that is a matter of taste. Pack the hot butter in hot, sterilized pint or half pint jars and process in a boiling water bath for ten minutes, counting from the time the water begins to boil with the jars in it.

Jackie



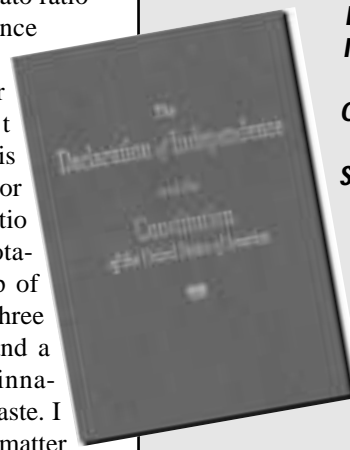
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Letters

(Dear Readers - Thank you for writing to Backwoods Home Magazine. The opinions and suggestions we receive from our readers are very important to us. We regret that we are no longer able to print or individually respond to every letter received due to the volume. We do read every letter received, and pass them along to the editor or writer concerned. We print a selection from our mail that best represents the views and concerns of our readers.

— The Editors)

Applause

I just love your magazine. It's the only way I'll ever be able to live in a "backwoods home," because I have serious health problems. While I can't move far from civilization, I truly enjoy Jackie Clay's columns and hints and can put many of them to use even in my country-suburban home. I also enjoy the articles regarding edible vegetation, cooking, etc.

Linda Mann

linda.mann@troutmansanders.com

Proposal for ending violent crime

Dear Mr. Silveira,

I recently read the article "A proposal for ending violent crime" that appeared in issue #79 with your name listed as the author. As I enjoy your writing, I can only hope that the imposter who wrote this abomination is swiftly caught and brought to justice. He had the audacity to put your name on a proposal endorsing the amputation of criminals' limbs. After having read the objections to the death penalty that you stated in "Why I Will Not Vote for a 'Law & Order' President" (very similar to my own objections)—that we have a fallible court system and stacked juries, and that innocent people are very often convicted—I can't imagine that you would like to see our government have the power to mutilate and permanently disable us based on a court conviction.

Due to the changes in domestic violence laws, police now often arrest all parties involved in an altercation, regardless of who the actual aggressor was. Victims of violence swept up in such arrests could become subject to amputations. If the courts are later found to be at fault in the case of someone who was crippled by order of the court, what are they going to do? Sew it back on at the state's expense? This should be especially troubling in light of the popular hysteria over guns. If someone tried to break into your home, and you either captured that person or ran him off at gunpoint, how would you feel about a court deciding that your pointing a gun at somebody qualifies you as "dangerous," especially if that decision meant getting your arm and leg chopped off?

Moreover, it just wouldn't work. The fact that murders still occur in Texas despite the number of people on death row tells us that the death penalty doesn't work. Why should maiming people be any different? Most criminals commit crimes because they don't think they'll ever get caught, or if they do think they'll get caught, they just don't care because their lives are already so empty and desperate. The author of this piece made mention of an amputee criminal being a "pathetic invalid sitting on his front porch." Now how in the world would a man who is no longer able to be productive in society, who is denied government aid, and who carries the stigma of being a violent felon going to pay for a house with a front porch? This fake goes on to say that he doesn't care who takes care of the convicts just so long as they don't receive any public money. He is deliberately blinding himself to the real-life world of cause-and-effect. If we start litter-

ing our streets with bitter, unemployed, outcast, one-armed, one-legged, homeless people who have proven themselves to be violent, I guarantee you we'll start seeing a bunch of suicidal wheelchair bombers rolling into public buildings to get revenge.

The thing that most clearly indicated that the article wasn't really yours, though, was the following:

"We change the Constitution, amending the prohibition against "cruel and unusual punishment" and we institute some exceptions."

As much as you have written about the Constitution, alerting us all to ways in which the government ignores it, and as much as you have stressed that the rights enumerated in the Bill of Rights are inalienable, basic, human rights, your readers know that the real John Silveira would never suggest compromising these basic rights for a little security. I wish you luck in apprehending the imposter and clearing your name.

Wayne Shingler
Columbus, Ohio

I read "The Last Word" (page 87, Jan/Feb) with great interest. While I find little to admire in Islamic culture, there is no arguing with the profound effect their medieval methods produce in crime control. As an ardent student of history, I read a discussion regarding eunuchs many years ago which prompted me to do a lengthy study on the subject of ancient crime. As a result of that study I wrote a brief essay (almost 30 years ago now) which I'm still fully convinced is the "CURE for Crime." For the sake of brevity, I'll just give you a brief outline of my findings: Eunuchs (castrated males) lose their interest in crime; it's like brain surgery! Castration actually seems to INCREASE their intellectual ability, hence they make excellent stewards, bookkeepers (they became amazingly honest), they even became military leaders (due, appar-

ently) to their even-tempered ability to deal with situations which would lead to panic or hasty decisions in those still "suffering" testosterone "poisoning." Studies have shown that 95% of all felons commit criminal acts for "the hell of it," not out of poverty or desperation. They do it because it is exciting! The remaining (almost) 5% are certifiable psychopaths. The conclusion of my study indicates with great certainty that the following means will (as they always have in the past) reduce crime to near zero: For misdemeanors, apply the lash; public floggings of varying intensities and public humiliation in the stocks is effective. The second felony conviction such as robbery, burglary, and drug dealing warrants surgical castration. For heinous offenses, such as murder, rape, child molestation, etc, castration for the FIRST offense (or the death penalty)...and let me add that ANY judicial decision should NOT be subject to endless appeals; any appeal should consist of a brief but careful review by a panel of judges to make sure the trial was conducted properly and then punishment carried out forthwith. Justice delayed is justice denied. Our founding fathers believed that it was "cruel and unusual" punishment to force a condemned man to wait more than 24 hours to be put to death. Castration has a sociological effect as well; other criminals tend to see eunuchs as some kind of "freak" or even a "queer" and refuse to associate with them, this tends to isolate them from "bad company" as well as serve as a warning to others. In a few instances (including the 5% psychopaths), castration is NOT enough. For any repeat offense following castration, surgical BLINDING is called for. It is painless and utterly effective. It's almost impossible to rob, pillage, or plunder when you're blind. They can't even write bad checks or deal dope without good eye-sight. AND...they can still earn their keep making brooms or some such in a

sheltered workshop. As I'm sure you know, castration has been proposed and "tested" in VERY limited terms in a few states in recent years. I feel that if the public was well aware of the actual psychological effects that castration produces in "mellowing out" criminal types, the public would be for it 1000%. It is still common practice to use castration to "settle" bulls, stallions and other domestic animals that prove too unruly. What about female criminals?? Statistics show that virtually 95% (same figures) commit crimes in concert with, at the behest of, or through influence of criminal MALES. The remaining 5% are almost always psychologically deranged, just like the males. Hope you can find space to print this. Keep up the good work...and check out the stats for yourself.

Tom Dolph
tomdolph@yahoo.com

Colin Powell

I love your magazine and I've been reading it for years!

I'm glad to finally see you speak your mind regarding the Colin Powell issue and about your perceptions of black folk in America.

I am a African American woman who, although amused by your editorial, thought it best that I jot down a few thoughts regarding it.

The same media that you discuss so eloquently in previous issues distorts not just the truth for some Americans but for all. I can assure you that the soundbites that you are basing your opinions on do not speak for the majority of African Americans any more than the trampling on the Constitution speaks for most White Americans. The question to ask yourself is who benefits from the kind of ideas you've come to take as truth—that blacks were excited by OJ's acquittal, that Colin Powell is a house slave, etc. The African Americans who disagreed with the positions that you point to as proof positive that we 'blacks' should be

ashamed of are just as silenced by the media as you would be if you didn't publish your own magazine.

Why don't you visit www.issue-views.com.

Don't believe the hype Dave. You are too bright for that. The reflection you see of 'blacks' in the media doesn't serve very many people. The more folks go around believing that blacks don't value self-reliance (this would be the funniest part of your editorial if you weren't so adamant about it...) the more it benefits the few who profit from our polarity.

If we are going to make it through these next few 'challenging' years we have got to move beyond these types of stereotypes, both blacks, whites, and other folk too, to look at the real challenges we have to overcome and to overcome them together.

Blacks, as you say, have assimilated just as others. We could look at the Irish Travelers and presume that Irish folk haven't assimilated...if that was all that the media focused on incessantly. Come on....move outta the view of that little bitty box called the tv and the mass media and think about it...what makes you think that the mass media speaks more fairly to the issue of 'blacks' than anyone else?

By the way I don't think you are racist for speaking your mind. It's refreshing. I hate the liberal tendency to pretend to want 'diversity' while all the while perpetrating some of the most backward and hateful policies ever seen. I must prefer to know where people stand and why.

And yes I believe in and practice self-reliance, I don't believe that Clarence Thomas nor Colin Powell are examples of self-reliance in the least bit. I love living in America and I am a proud and strong African American Woman.

Ms M Johnson
conscioussista23@hotmail.com

As a African American when I hear a statement such as this it causes me

to perk up my ears and become more alert because most assuredly what will follow will be filled with negative statements concerning African Americans as a whole. You did not disappoint me, nevertheless I will answer a few of your questions from a personal view.

In the real world, blacks and whites criticize each other every day with their peers, co-workers, family, etc. So do Mexicans, Koreans, Puerto Rican and many other races. I know of no AA who resent Colin Powell's climb out of the slums of New York. On the contrary I myself sincerely appreciate the discipline and respect he has exhibited in his life and use him as a motivational point in the lives of my children and myself. Many African Americans, Caucasians, Mexicans and.....(well you get the picture) do.

The "Black Leaders" who did not come to Clarence Thomas' defense but did come to Clinton's defense do NOT represent African Americans as a whole, contrary to popular belief. Insofar as Clinton becoming an honorary member of the Arkansas Black Hall of Fame, the board members must have seen something about him that I did not.

O.J. Simpson, now did you really want to go there? Apparently. Personally, I could not believe it when Simpson was found not guilty. I walked around in a daze until an elderly AA woman explained it to me. "White folks, honey, have been freely lynching and robbing us negros since we set foot here," she said. "They have raped our bodies and denied our minds, and for the most part they have always gotten away with it, always." Then she told of a recent story where somewhere in Texas a black man had been cut in pieces or torn in pieces by a group of whites.

That was when I understood why the black crowds hooted and hollered, because yes, one of America's Boy Kings had smashed his crown by killing two white people and got away with it. It had nothing

to do with right or wrong....it was tit for tat, but you knew that didn't you?

Let me bring this to a close because I do not have time to "answer" more of your questions....."successful" assimilation depends on many things and the closer one culture/race resemble another the more chance of a "successful" merge. African Americans are beginning to stand up on their own two feet mentally and financially. We are, more and more, seen in places you once did not see us. We are being heard where we once were not heard. The potential has always been here and today by the masses, we are utilizing it.

We have reached outstanding levels and will continue to climb.

Glynis Caesar
glyniscaesar@barberonline.com

With all do respect you are certainly entitled to your opinion about "Black People" i.e. African People born in Amerikkka in captivity.

Your Irish grandmother did not arrive in amerikkka in the bottom of a slaveship as my ancestors did, furthermore, Mr. Duffy, your arrogance in assuming that you are somehow authorized to identify "Black People" in amerikkka, is a good example of why when you decide to grace us with your worthless opinion of us, be advised, no matter how much you want to forget the past, we will never forget it. Your Irish family history is yours, our History is another matter all together.

You say we are amerikkans, NO, Mr. Duffy, Citizenship is not something that can be imposed on others, it requires mutuality, No one has ever asked us if we want to be Citizens. What other Citizens in amerikkka have their voting rights renewed every 6 yrs by congress, Mr. Duffy?

How many Irish votes were not counted in Florida?

<http://www.directblackaction.com>

How many citizens in amerikka had laws passed against the education of their people for hundreds of years?

How many Jim Crow laws have your Irish ancestors had to contend with in amerikka?

How many Irish were and are being lynched in amerikkka?

How many Irish people are profiled by the rogue police and harassed, maimed, and killed, just for driving while black?

Hell, the Irish are the rogue police!

How many Irish are in prison, with the 2 million "Blacks" locked behind bars in amerikka?

How many Irish are the subject of Genocidal special virus programs?

<http://www.boydgraves.com/news/121102.html>

<http://www.boydgraves.com/www/ucifercheckmated.html>

The next time you decide to grace us with your Irish, white Anglo Saxon worldview, just remember, you're white, meaning you don't have a clue, because we are not YOU.

REPARATIONS & REPATRIATION FOR AFRICAN PEOPLE BORN IN CAPTIVITY IN amerikka, NOW!

Ngone Ada Aw
NgoneA@webtv.net

We sure do love Backwoods Home and read it cover to cover. Always enjoy Dave's MY VIEW and especially the last one regarding the attack on Colin Powell. I don't think it could have been written any better. How do we get this published in some of the newspapers around the country? Can I just make a copy of it and send it on????

...Thanks for a wonderful magazine. I'm believing with you that you will expand to a greater audience of readers. You have got the goods and talents.

Shirley Hartley
Reynolds, Georgia

The last word

Do we really need Yuppies?

Yuppies: they're the folks we love to hate. Snobs and show-offs, the whole bunch of them. They're the first on your block with cell phones, 2.5 GHz PCs, Segway scooters, Palm Pilots... What purpose or benefit do these people, who run out and suck up the latest fad toys, serve? The world would be a whole lot better off without them. Right?

Wrong. Without them we'd still be in the Dark Ages. Am I kidding?

What if I told you the rise of modern western civilization can be attributed to the Yuppies of the 15th century? It was the middle class, what was then the merchant class, that drove the Renaissance and the Age of Discovery. They were the Yuppies of their time. Before the rise of that class, which started in Italy and spread throughout Europe, there was little nonreligious art and literature, even less in the way of science and technology, and almost no trade between Europe and the rest of the world. Because there was no trade, there were almost no spices, tea, or anything else Europeans couldn't produce for themselves. Only the Church, royalty, and the nobility had money to buy anything and there were very few of them—certainly not enough to support artists, research, or prosperous trade routes. There were too few to pay for these goods. So tea and silk stayed in China. Spice stayed in the East Indies. Most of the would-be Rembrandts, Mozarts, and Dantes had no one to whom they could sell their wares and were consigned to their plows, or chopping wood, or herding sheep. How many geniuses were lost to humanity because there was no one there to pay them for what they could have done best?

It was after the first Yuppies emerged in Europe that the printing press with movable type came along. It was used to print and sell books, including the Bible, to others in this rising middle class. It was because this middle class kept the printing presses busy that, ultimately, poor folks could afford a family Bible, or the works of Milton, or their own copy of Shakespeare. Before that, there were no books except in the Church, and therefore, almost no literacy. Until that time books had been laboriously copied by hand making their costs so prohibitive that only the rich could own them. Had it not been for the Yuppies of their day, almost all of us would be illiterate because the printing press would have rusted away in Gutenberg's barn, its production unsold and unused.

And it's been Yuppies driving progress ever since. In the century we just bade goodbye, it was the Yuppies of their generations who ensured that the rest of us would one day

afford cars, televisions, computers, telephones, air travel, and all the other things that are hallmarks of our times.

If Yuppies and Yuppie-like consumers hadn't bought products and services like these when they were first introduced and still expensive, most, if not all, would have died like unripened fruit on the vine.

Sure, there were tinkerers who would have bought them. And some would be the domain of other large businesses or the rich, as with mainframe computers and yachts. But just as with PCs, geeks and businesses buying them wasn't enough. It takes Yuppies, buying en masse and waiting in line to buy each new generation of faster computer with more storage and better graphics to create a market that eventually brought the prices of PCs down, drove the quality up, and made them mainstream. Without Yuppies, the computer on my desk simply wouldn't be there. Cell phones would be all but nonexistent.

One of the reasons many poorer countries have problems tapping their native geniuses and creating new, affordable products to bring to market is that they don't have a Yuppie class that nurtures that genius or supports the producers at a time when products are new, primitive, and expensive to produce. In the 1930s Stalin, then dictator of the Soviet Union, invited Henry Ford to come to Moscow. He asked Ford to give him some advice on how to build the fleets of trucks and farm equipment the Soviets needed to march into the 20th century. Ford gave the old Ruskie the secret to building an empire with which he could have conquered the world. He told Stalin to build cars first and turn the Soviet Union into a nation of drivers. Of course, the only way to sell the first cars off the assembly line would have been to sell them to...you guessed it, the Soviets would have had to build a Yuppie class, first. It wasn't the communist way. The Evil Empire fell further and further behind the West until now it has crumbled—because it did not coddle its Yuppies.

I imagine that when the first of our ancestors climbed out of the trees to hunt on the ground, or skinned an animal and wore its fur to keep warm, or said, "I'm sick of sleeping in the rain," and built a hut, it was the Yuppies of their day who said, "Wow, what are you doing there?" and next thing you know, they—we—were all doing it.

Just recently, it was Yuppies flocking to the Internet who fueled Internet service providers so we could all get on. And it is they who are fueling what is going to be the next great economic boom when e-commerce takes off. When they're done there, stand back, because the Yuppies will be, as always, somewhere else, spending their money and dragging the rest of us, kicking and screaming, into the future.

So, give the Yuppies a break. For centuries they've supported genius and innovation while the rest of us stood back and watched—and waited—until it was safe to jump in.

Without them the rest of us would still be living in caves. Δ

— John Silveira